

In Wild Maratha Battle

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“PRESENTLY THERE WAS REVEALED TO HIM THE WHOLE
FORM OF THE GODDESS”

In Wild Maratha Battle

A Tale of the Days of Shivaji

BY

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"Tales of Indian Chivalry" and
"The Princess of Balkh"

*With Illustrations by Paul Hardy,
and a Map*

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PREFACE

In composing this story of the days of Shivaji I have, besides continually consulting the volumes of the Gazetteer on Thana, Poona, and Satara, derived valuable information from the following books:—

Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas*.

Ranade's *Rise of the Maratha Power*.

Manwaring's *Marathi Proverbs*.

Forrest's *Selections* (Maratha Series, vol. i).

Fryer's *East India and Persia*.

Douglas's *Bombay and Western India*.

Acworth's *Ballads of the Marathas*.

Broughton's *Letters from a Maratha Camp*.

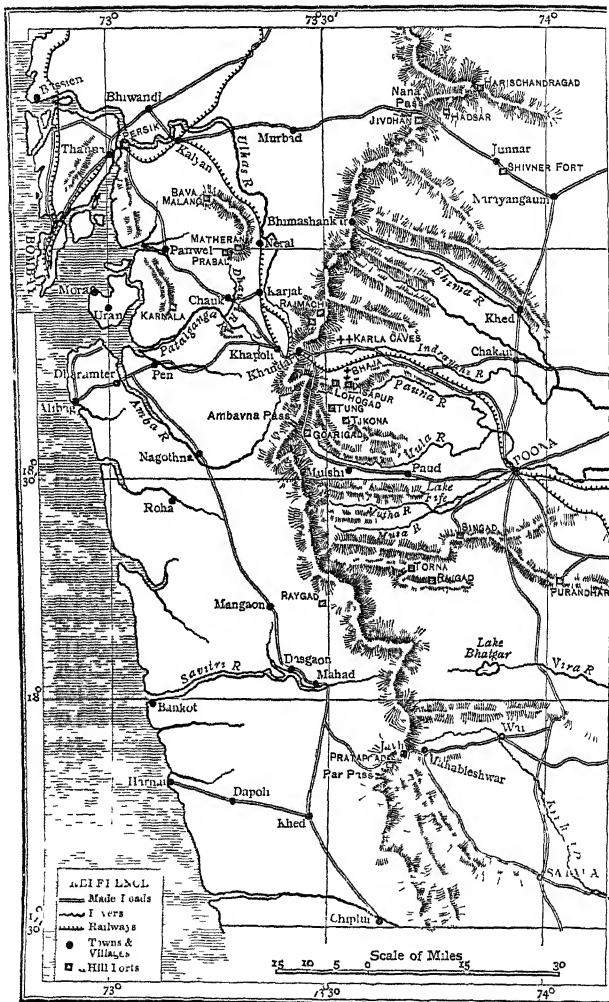
Oman's *Mystics, Saints, and Ascetics of India*.

Mankar's *Life and Exploits of Shivaji*: translated from an unpublished Marathi manuscript.

For the map I am indebted to Mr. D. D. Kapadia of the College of Science, Poona.

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Map to illustrate *In Wld Maratha Battle*

IN WILD MARATHA BATTLE

CHAPTER I

ON THE BANKS OF THE DHAURI

IN the cool of the evening, more than two hundred and fifty years ago, three children were playing together merrily on the outskirts of Chauk, a village pleasantly situated on the main route between Bombay and Poona. The river Dhauri, that flowed past the field in which they were playing, proceeded from the deep valley between Matheran and Prabhul, huge sister mountains that rose crowned with luxuriant foliage two or three thousand feet above the plain of the Konkan. Some twelve miles to the south-east, the road, such as it was, began to ascend the mighty mountain-wall of the Western Ghauts, which divides the plain of the Konkan from the high table-land of the Dekkan. The Konkan

plain is a long strip of land, about thirty or forty miles broad, between the Indian Ocean and the mountains of the Ghauts. Climb up the Ghauts and you reach the highest portion of the Dekkan, which slopes away to the eastern shores of the great peninsula, so that such rivers as the Bhima and Kistnah, though their sources are within forty miles of the ocean that washes the western shores of India, have to flow nearly a thousand miles eastwards before they reach the sea, and pour their waters into the Bay of Bengal. Along the road that rises from Chauk over the Ghauts lies the route to Poona, Central India, and the famous cities of the Great Mogul, who, at the time of our story, ruled over the greater part of India, and was eager to widen his empire till it stretched from the Indian Ocean to the Bay of Bengal, and from Samarkand to Ceylon. The village of Chauk was only about twenty miles from the western ocean, but it was already dangerously near the ever-extending circle of the Mogul Empire. However, at the time of the events recorded in my story it was more directly exposed to the oppression of another Mahometan power, the kingdom of Bijapur, the rulers of which,

from their great capital in the south, claimed sovereignty over the Konkan as far as Kalyan, an important town twenty-two miles north of Chauk. Thus the unfortunate inhabitants of the Konkan were subject to the oppression of the civil and military officials sent out from Bijapur, not to mention the claims of the chiefs of their own religion and race, who exercised independent or semi-independent power in the neighbourhood. Under these circumstances oppression and anarchy reigned in the Konkan. But in all their troubles the people were comforted by an anticipation of a better day dawning. All over the plains, valleys, and mountains of Maharashtra a prophecy was bandied from mouth to mouth declaring that "the time for deliverance will come at last, and the virgins will announce it with songs of joy, and the skies will shower their flowers." Under the influence of these hopes the men of the country began to raise their heads and assume the bearing of free-men. There was in the air a spirit of freedom and hope, like the breath of the monsoon wind when it brings refreshing showers to the soil of India, parched and browned by eight months' drought. This spirit, from

whatever mysterious source of inspiration it proceeded, pervaded the hearts of high and low, rich and poor, and was even present in the games of the three children who were playing on the banks of the Dhauri

The eldest of the three was a boy of twelve, called Nettaji, large-boned and tall, and strong for his age. He held in his right hand a stout bamboo stick, with which he was violently belabouring a great cactus-bush, all the while shouting the Maratha war-cry, "Har, har, Mahadeo!", as he made the white blood flow from the juicy branches of his imaginary enemy. Owing to the violence of his exertions his body was bathed in perspiration, and his red turban had been shaken off his head. His companions were two little girls, one three years younger than himself, the other only about seven years old. The younger of the two was his cousin, the elder was his sister. The cousin, who was called Kashi, vehemently applauded his efforts.

"Well fought, brave warrior!" she cried, and her black eyes seemed to flash fire. "When thou hast slain a hundred bearded Mahometans, I will crown thee with a wreath of these champak blossoms."

His sister Gunga seemed of a gentler and less imaginative nature

"Dear Nettya," she said, "come away home Our mother will be angry to see thee in such a heat, and, look, thou hast torn thy clothes and let thy fine new turban fall in the dust"

"Never mind that faint-hearted maiden," exclaimed the other "Thou must slay, and slay, and slay, for know well that, as long as a single Mahometan remains alive in Maharashtra, I will never be thy bride"

At this moment an old servant appeared on the scene She scolded the little virago for being out so late, and took her by the hand to lead her home

Kashi pouted, and said to her companions "Well, I suppose I must go, although I am sure it is quite early Thou," she added for Nettaji's special benefit, "hast not slain nearly enough Mahometans this afternoon, so the wreath I wove for thee must crown my own head And, indeed, I think it will suit me better than thee"

So saying, she crowned herself with the wreath of champak, the blossoms of which shone like a circlet of great white stars on

her coal-black hair. A very pretty picture she made as she smiled adieu to her little friends, and was led off to her rich father's mansion casting many a look behind.

When she had gone, Nettaji picked up his turban, and with the help of the tender little Gunga arranged it in seemly fashion on his head, after which brother and sister, hand in hand, or rather, according to the Indian fashion, finger interlaced with finger, strolled slowly away to their humble home in the village of Chauk.

CHAPTER II

THE WEDDING PROCESSION

SOME six years have passed since we saw the three children playing on the banks of the Dhauri. Nettaji is now a tall stripling with the first down of manhood shadowing his upper lip. Kashi is no longer to be seen playing outside the precincts of her father's mansion, and the gentle Gunga has reached and almost passed the age at which it is usual for Maratha girls to be settled for life. How-

ever, her marriage is not long to be delayed. Her parents have found for her a bridegroom, whom they consider a suitable match, in the neighbouring town of Vadgaon, and as he is considerably richer than her father, she is to be taken in procession to his house, that the marriage may there be celebrated with fitting pomp

During the last six years the spirit of freedom has become stronger in the northern Konkan. In the absence of any recognized head for those who are disposed to rebel against the rule of Bijapur, it shows itself in frequent attacks upon the small bands of the soldiery of the ruling power, who patrol the country to enforce the payment of taxes and overawe the disaffected. These attacks irritate the Bijapur soldiers, who, far from the control of the government at the capital, often cruelly retaliate on the inhabitants of the Hindu villages, and punish the helpless and unoffending for crimes that have been committed by others.

Under these circumstances, as many such affrays between the populace and the Bijapur soldiery have taken place in the neighbourhood of Chauk it is not considered safe to

send Gunga to Vadgaon unprotected. But Gunga's parents are so poor, that the procession which accompanies her horse-litter is neither very large nor very well equipped. Some ten or twelve of her male relatives, mounted on Dekkan ponies and armed with swords of various shapes, ride before and behind it. Conspicuous among them is young Nettaji, on a large horse he has borrowed for the occasion from the father of Kashi, the playmate of his childhood. He enjoys, boylike, the importance of his position as the nearest relation of the bride, and is proud of the gold-embroidered sash and the long sword which it supports. So, in the pride of youth and health he rides up and down the procession, now in the front and now in the rear.

The procession followed the course of the Dhauri for two miles, until it flowed into the Patalganga. They then turned to the right along the right bank of the latter stream, when their course was suddenly arrested by a rude interruption. A strong body of Mahometan soldiery blocked the path. The leaders of the wedding-party, with a dread of violence that was only too well grounded, turned their horses' heads with the intention

of beating a hasty retreat to Chauk But when they looked round, they saw the road was blocked in that direction too The Mahometans levelled their matchlocks, and one of their leaders called out in a loud voice that, if the least resistance were offered, they would fire One or two of the boldest among Gunga's escort made a movement to turn her horse-litter off the road and escape by a side path Immediately a volley was fired, which wounded two of them and killed a third outright Further resistance was seen to be futile against such overwhelming superiority of force The two wounded men and the rest of the escort turned their horses off the road and fled, leaving behind them Gunga in her litter, their dead comrade, and Nettaji, who refused to leave his sister

Poor Gunga was so alarmed that she could not even weep Her brother dismounted from his horse, and stood by her side trying to comfort her, and assuring her that he would never leave her

A Mahometan in rich armour, who seemed to be the leader of the party, now came up to them and said to Nettaji

“Do not be downcast, young man, for to-

day's chance may be the making of your fortunes Your sister goes with us to Bijapur, where she may become the wife of one of the great nobles of the king You yourself will soon be a strong man, and may hope for advancement in the imperial army, especially if you give up your devilish Hindu idols, and become a true believer in the one God, and in Mahomet, his prophet So accept the gifts of fortune, even though they come in rough guise Sheathe your sword, and come along with us "

Nettaji's only answer to this insolent proposal was a sudden thrust, which buried his sword deep in the Mahometan leader's heart. He fell dead on the ground, to the horror of his followers, who turned fiercely on the young man The very number and fury of Nettaji's assalants at first prevented them from delivering an effectual blow, and he succeeded in wounding several of them before he fell senseless and bleeding in the dust As he lay there, a fanatic mullah who happened to be with the party was for thrusting a spear into his heart to make sure of his death A young officer, however, who was standing by, prevented him, saying that it was no honour to kill the slain

"Nay, but, Rustum Zuman," replied the mullah, "he has perhaps but swooned. Think twice before you give him a chance of life, for life to him may be death to many true believers. If that boy ever reaches the strength of manhood, he will assuredly be a mighty warrior. It has been well said by Shaikh Sadi, that whoever has his foe at his mercy and does not kill him, is his own enemy. With a stone in his hand and the snake's head convenient, a wise man hesitates not to crush it."

But Rustum Zuman was a generous foe, and the thought of the young man's prowess and devotion to his sister moved him strongly to mercy.

"The same Shaikh Sadi," he replied "teaches us that there is no great difficulty in separating the soul from the body, but it is not so easy to restore life to the dead. prudence dictates patience in giving the arrow flight, for let it quit the bow and it never can be recalled. Even though the young man should be alive, I cannot see him thus butchered in cold blood. But I know well that he is dead."

So Nettaji received no more wounds that day, and was left lying motionless where he

had fallen. He was not, however, dead. After he had lain unconscious for some hours by the roadside, he opened his eyes. As it was now quite dark, he had no idea how long he had been lying on the ground. For some time more he lay quiet, being too weak to move. At last he was able to rise, and staggered back to the village through the darkness, often resting by the way.

When at last he reached his father's house, he found his parents passing a sleepless night, and bemoaning the evil fate that had fallen upon them, and deprived them of two children at one fell stroke. With mingled feelings of grief and joy they received the poor wounded boy, and heard what had befallen him and his sister after the others had fled. Then they anointed his wounds with oil and put him tenderly to bed, where for a few short hours he was allowed to sleep.

In Wild Maratha Battle

CHAPTER III

FLIGHT TO MATHERAN

BUT Nettaji could not be allowed to rest long. He had slain with his own hand a Bijapur officer of high rank, and could hardly expect to escape the penalty of death except by immediate flight. He would be branded as a Hindu rebel, and it would avail him little to urge that he did the deed while defending his sister against a brutal and unprovoked attack. His best chance of safety lay in the fact that he had been left for dead where he fell. His father, therefore, resolved to have him secretly conveyed away in the night, and to conceal from everyone the fact that he had returned alive from the affray.

On the top of the neighbouring mountain of Matheran dwelt a member of the family, who had been a great warrior in his youth, but had some years before given up the world and taken to the life of a hermit. After wandering for some years to visit the most sacred shrines in India, he had settled in a cave on the summit of Matheran. As that mountain-top was neither fortified nor pro-

ductive, and the Mahometan rulers had therefore no temptation to visit it, Nettaji's father determined to send him that very night to the care of the hermit

Before the first gray light of dawn appeared, the boy was roused from his sleep and told that he must immediately leave his home to take refuge on the mountain height. If he was too weak to walk, men would be procured to carry him to his destination. He was, however, warned that, as it was imperatively necessary to conceal the fact that he was living, it would be safer to take as few men as possible into the secret.

Nettaji, though still weak, was somewhat refreshed by his few hours' rest, and bravely undertook to walk up the mountain. So in the dark hour that precedes the dawn, after a tender farewell from his parents, with his face muffled up he started on foot, accompanied by one trusty attendant, for his new home on the summit of Matheran.

After proceeding six or seven miles up a gentle ascent they reached the foot of the great natural stone staircase now known as Jacob's Ladder to the visitors who twice a year, in the hot months of May and October,

repair to Matheran to escape the relaxing heat of Bombay. This staircase of huge rocky boulders rises up two thousand feet or more to the edge of the Matheran plateau. When he had struggled on thus far, poor Nettaji was so exhausted that he could proceed no farther, and it was useless to attempt the ascent.

While they were resting at the foot of the staircase, a band of the hill tribe called Thakurs appeared on the scene. They were returning to their home on the mountain, and Yesaji, Nettaji's attendant, applied to them for assistance in their difficulty. At first they stipulated for a considerable sum of money to reward them for the labour of carrying the boy up the hill, but, when they heard that he was going to be a pupil of the famous hermit, they refused to take even the smallest coin, such was their reverence for the holy man. They then pointed out that Nettaji in his weak condition could not without the greatest discomfort and possible injury be carried up the steep flight of steps that rose above them. They therefore proposed to take him round by a longer and easier route, which would allow him to be carried on a bier.

Yesaji readily agreed to this proposal. A bier was speedily constructed of branches, and Nettaji was put into it, after the hillmen had spread over the boughs their *kamlis*, long pieces of thick cloth, something like the Scotch Highlanders' plaids, which they carry with them and use for protection against the cold and the rain. On this bier Nettaji was carried by a circuitous path along the belt of forest with which Matheran is girt half-way up on every side. They went round below the two prominences now called Big and Little Chauk Points, and gradually ascended to the top through the primæval forest on the east side of the mountain. They carried their charge so gently, and with such even steps, that he was rocked to sleep, and lay unconscious for the greater part of the way. When they reached the top, a short walk along a well-trodden path overshadowed by jambul-trees led them to the presence of the holy hermit.

The hermit's home was a small cave in a solitary boulder of rock overshadowed by the foliage of a great jambul-tree. It was known far and wide as the Panther's Cave, for its previous tenant had been a fierce panther, that had slain and devoured the

oxen and dogs of the pool hill-folk, until the hermit came and killed it with his long spear and took its spotted skin for a mantle to his shoulders. The cave was an even more convenient abode for the hermit than it had been for the panther. It had been provided by Nature with a door and a window, and its stone floor, standing high above the level of the surrounding earth, afforded a perfectly dry plinth, even when the mountain-top was deluged with the monsoon rains.

The furniture of the rocky chamber was of the scantiest and simplest description. There was neither chair, nor bed, nor cupboard, for the hermit sat cross-legged on the stone floor, slept on nothing softer than his leopard-skin, and had no valuables to keep under lock and key. His long bamboo spear leant against the wall, and his sword was hidden out of sight in a dark recess. In one corner stood two heavy pieces of coloured wood, shaped like nine-pins. These were the Indian clubs with which he exercised himself morning and evening, so that, although he was now some fifty years old, his muscles were still as hard as iron, and stood out prominently on his spare arms, legs, and chest.

Around him and about his person were his few possessions. On the ground lay his begging-bowl, his water-pot, and his iron fire-tongs. Round his neck hung his rosary of sacred basil-wood. He had also symbols of his wanderings over India, like the palms and shells that Christian pilgrims used to carry as tokens of their visits to the Holy Land and the shrine of St James at Compostella. The iron armlet on his right arm had been brought from a Himalayan shrine. The metallic substance called *suvarna makshika*, or golden fly, that adorned his hair, told of a visit to the temple of Kali in Beluchistan. The white conch-shell on his wrist showed that he had made a pilgrimage to Rameshwar, in the south of India.

Yesaji introduced to the hermit his master's son, telling him the melancholy story of his sister's abduction and his narrow escape from death. The hermit listened to the tale with earnest attention, and willingly agreed to accept Nettaji as his pupil and spiritual son.

Then the faithful servant, after a very short stay on the mountain-top, said farewell, and departed in order that he might as quickly as possible tell Nettaji's parents of the success

of his mission and relieve them from the anxiety they would be feeling on their son's account. So he went down Jacob's Ladder, and left young Nettaji in charge of the hermit in the Panther's Cave¹

CHAPTER IV

LIFE ON THE MOUNTAIN-TOP

WHEN Yesaji had gone, the hermit spoke a few words of kindly welcome and advice to his new pupil, and pointed out to him the corner of the cave in which he was to spread his mattress of matting. Through the heat of the day on which he arrived the boy was allowed to repose on his lowly pallet, under the shadow of the massive roof of living rock. Towards sunset he was sufficiently rested to accompany his preceptor some way round the mountain, and be shown the beauty of the forest that crowned its summit, and of the valleys below. They rested for a few moments by the iron-tinctured spring from

¹ The Panther's Cave still exists, and may be seen in the compound of Mr P N Kapadia's new bungalow

which he was to draw the drinking and bathing water that would be required for their daily needs. The sun had just set behind the great mountain of Prabhul on the west, but the sky was still bright with purple and golden hues. To their left, two or three thousand feet below them, they could descry the mango and jambul trees that embowered the village of Chauk, where, through the translucent atmosphere, the exact situation of the home of Nettaji's father was distinctly visible. Thanks to a tender compact they had made between them before parting, he knew that his father and mother would now be thinking of him and breathing a prayer for his safety, and he hoped that by the little Kashi also he would not be quite forgotten. Thus his soul was able to leap across the intervening space, and return to the family circle from which he had been banished for the time by a cruel stroke of fate. At a distance of about twenty-five miles past the right shoulder of Prabhul they could see the white houses of the Portuguese town of Bombay, and its broad harbour dotted with the black hulls of ships that came from distant Europe. In the centre of the view stood Prabhul, Matheran's

sister mountain, half of it bare rock and half clothed in forest, but all of it black in the shadow of the sun that was sinking behind it

Had Nettaji's life in the green wood on the mountain-top not been clouded over by the dark uncertainty as to his sister's fate, it might have been as near an approach to perfect happiness as is possible in this world. The fresh mountain breezes were delightful and exhilarating as compared with the languid air of the valley in which he had hitherto lived. The beauty of the long vistas of the forest glades and the distant views over the plains below were sources of never-failing delight. In his temperament the love of action was combined with thoughtfulness, and both sides of his character had complete satisfaction in his new life.

Many hours of each day were devoted to his physical education, in the course of which he was put through an elaborate system of gymnastic training. The principal exercises were with the Indian clubs, which are wielded much in the same way as our dumbbells, and with the *lejum*, a stiff bow of iron bent by a strong iron chain. In order to

expand the chest this bow was stretched to the full extent of the right and left arm alternately, while the other hand drew the chain in the opposite direction. He had also to go through the exercise called the *dund*. This consists in going down on all-fours with hands and feet about twenty inches apart, then bending the arms till the chest is within three or four inches of the ground, and raising the body again by straightening the elbows. At first Nettare found it difficult to do this often, but after many days' practice he could lower and raise himself several hundreds of times in succession. Such was the method by which Maratha warriors, long before the age of Sandow and Maclaren, were taught to develop every muscle of their bodies.

The hermit also gave him lessons in the use of arms, telling him that his training was not to be regarded as complete until the pupil excelled the master in the use of the sword, the bow, and the spear. But first it was necessary to teach the boy how much he had to learn. He had excelled his comrades of the same age in the village in all athletic exercises, and was inclined to think that he was, without further training, well able

to distinguish himself in the ranks of war. So on the third morning after his arrival the hermit took him out and put a light spear in his hand, and pointing to a rock at fifty yards' distance, "Let me see you throw your spear," he said, "over that rock."

The boy, anxious to show off his prowess to his instructor, made a great effort, and just managed to accomplish the prescribed feat.

The master applauded him, saying

"You have good muscles for your years, and when you are able to put all your strength into the cast of your spear, you may become a mighty spearman. But in the way you held your spear half of your strength was wasted. You should hold it like this."

Then, lifting his far heavier spear, he hurled it, apparently without the slightest effort, so that it alighted close to the spot where the boy's spear had fallen.

Then the master put a sword into his pupil's hand, and himself took a *patta* or defensive sword, with which the Maratha warrior learns to defend himself not only against one assailant, but against the simultaneous attack of two or three enemies.

“Let me see what you can do at sword-play,” he said “Do your best to hit me on head, arms, or legs”

“How can I be so irreverent as to strike my preceptor?” the boy asked, throwing away his sword with a passionate gesture of shame

“My son,” replied the hermit, “obedience is the truest reverence Pick up thy sword and do as I tell you”

Nettaji obeyed, and in a faint-hearted manner made some passes, which were easily parried He then warmed to his work, and delivered blows right and left, and high and low, but never succeeded in reaching his aim The hermit's flexible steel seemed ubiquitous, and surrounded him on all sides as it were with an impregnable wall At last, when he saw that the boy was getting exhausted, he enlaced the two blades, and with a quick turn of his wrist sent that of his assailant flying into a neighbouring bush

This was the first lesson that Nettaji received from the hermit in the use of arms, and a very important lesson it was, seeing that conviction of ignorance is the first and greatest step towards the attainment of knowledge

I have said that the thoughtful side of Netti's nature did not remain undeveloped on the mountain-top. The hermit taught him to read, so that he could feed his soul on the heroic deeds related of Rama, Bhima, and Arjuna in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the great epic poems that are to India what the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were to ancient Greece. His ambition was rather to win glory such as they had won, than to succeed in gaining wealth and power by ordinary means. As he paced through the woodland glades or looked down on the plains beneath, he yearned to hasten the time when all the Konkan below and the Dekkan above should be ruled by some great Hindu king, like Rama or Yudhishtira. In these aspirations he was encouraged by his instructor, whose soul was gladdened by similar visions of a glorious future, when he was absorbed in his trances and became insensible to all external objects. The hermit said that he himself had worked with brain and sword to bring about the great deliverance, but had failed because the time appointed by the gods had not yet come. Now, however, he knew that it was near at hand, and that his pupil would play a

great part in establishing the rule of a great deliverer over the fair hills and valleys of Maharashtra

Such were the thoughts that passed through the mind of young Nettaji when, in the intervals of rest allowed by his religious exercises and his physical and mental training, he lay at sunset reclined with his chin on his hands on some far-projecting precipice, from which he could contemplate the distant mountains, and mile upon mile of the Konkan plain, steeped in the quivering blue haze of the Indian sunlight

CHAPTER V

THE HERMIT'S VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

SOME two years were spent in this healthy life on the summit of Matheran. Meantime the hermit was growing older, and his trances were becoming deeper and longer and more frequent. One day in the beginning of October, 1648, when the monsoon had ceased to deluge the mountain in rain or shroud it in mist, and when the many-twinkling smile of

the morning sun once more glinted on the burnished foliage of the evergreen trees, he called his pupil to him and said

“My son, the shadow of approaching death is spreading over me I know not whence the stroke will come, except that it will fall on me suddenly Over thee, too, danger of death is hovering, but my inner visions tell me that thou wilt escape, and that Mahaiashtra will not lose thee for many a long year We must, therefore, be prepared When my death comes, it is time for thee to leave thy seclusion in the mountain forest and go to meet thy destiny in the world below A good and obedient pupil thou hast been to me, and well I know that thou wilt never disgrace thy preceptor's name by treachery, cruelty, or cowardice In strength and martial prowess thou art now well able to take the first place among the leaders of Mahaiashtra Thou canst throw the spear farther and shoot the arrow straighter than thy master, and (for I will now say a proud word) thou art able to do what no one in India has ever been able to do, for thou canst stand against me, and sometimes surpass me, in sword-play The only weapon thou hast now to learn the use of is the fire-

arm of the Feringhi¹ But doubtless the clear eye that guides thy unerring bow will enable thee to aim the matchlock also aright I have also taught thee not only how to wield thy arms well, but how best to arrange horse and foot in the field of battle Thou art thus in every way fitted for thy duties as a warrior See that thou usest aright the knowledge and power that thou hast acquired Never draw thy sword except to defend the oppressed, and in the cause of thy religion and thy countrymen

“Among the signs of my approaching death are the clearer visions of the future that pour in upon my soul The great god Shiva has again and again appeared to me, and revealed to me that he has taken the form of a man, to free Maharashtra Would that it were vouchsafed to me to fight by his side in the glorious struggle! It may not be, but it is something that I can send him as his servant thee, the son of my heart

“Often I see the incarnate God leading his warriors against the bearded hosts of Islam, and ever I see thee at his right hand in the day of victory and the hour of danger For he is not always victorious and triumphant No,

¹Feringhi = European

he is like yonder stately anjan-tree, that bends ever and anon before the might of the tempest, but is never broken or uprooted. Sometimes he is a fugitive, and sometimes I see him bending low to the lordly foe. But ever he rises again, and the seeming suppliant plunges his deadly sword into the heart of the enemy, who is deluded into thinking him conquered. O for one hour of the joy of battle by his side, when he turns like a tiger on his pursuers and drives them to perdition!

“Oh, my son, treasure my visions in thy heart, for perchance this may be the last time that fate allows me to address thee. Thou wilt stand by the side of the great saviour of his people, when at last, triumphant over all his enemies, he takes his seat on his golden throne under the silken umbrella, the symbol of his regal power, as Emperor of Maharashtia. I see in my mind's eye the Brahmins and ministers sprinkling over his head the waters brought from the most sacred rivers and fountains of India, and the golden lotus-flowers set with precious jewels distributed among the immense concourse assembled on the airy mountain of Rairi to greet him on the great day that consummates his work on earth.

Even farther into the misty future my vision bears me, to the time when the incarnate God returns to his heavenly home His work remains firmly built by his wisdom and might His successors lead their followers far beyond the bounds of Maharashtra, till they sit as conquerors in the palaces of Delhi and Agra, and water their steeds in the sacred stream of the Ganges

“And now, my son, go apart and ponder all my words, while I pray for thee and for our country, and beseech the great gods to hasten the time of deliverance”

Nettaji, obedient to the words of his master, withdrew to one of his favourite seats on a great spur projecting from the eastern edge of the table-land The hermit followed his departing steps with yearning eyes and mingled feelings of sorrow and pride He felt that he had conferred a priceless boon on his country by the training he had given to his pupil during the two years that they had lived together on the mountain He somehow knew that the bond between them would soon be snapped by death However, he consoled himself with the thought that his life's work was done, and that his dream of the

liberation of his native land would be carried out by younger hands

Nettaji sat for a long time musing His eyes were turned to the mountain range of the Ghauts, and dreamily watched the clouds of mist vanishing as the sun climbed slowly up the eastern sky, but his mind was so absorbed in thinking over the last words of his master that he was hardly conscious for the time of the external world.

He was roused from his abstraction by a loud roar, immediately followed by the fall of a heavy body just behind him He sprang to his feet and looked round Within ten yards from where he stood lay the bodies of a great tiger and of the hermit They were both quite dead The tiger had thrown himself with all the weight of his bound through the air on the hermit's spear, which had pierced him to the heart, but in the moment of death his great paw had broken the hermit's skull It was evident that the hermit had been uneasy about the fate of his pupil, and followed him unseen to watch over his safety He saw the tiger coming, and stood between him and his prey, thus saving his pupil's life at the expense of his own.

The hermit's body was borne to its last resting-place, followed by a large crowd of mourners, who showed their respect for him by sprinkling red powder over his body, drumming on their tom-toms, and sounding their brass cymbals; for all the inhabitants of the mountain loved him as a father, and almost revered him as a god. He was seated upright on his bier, covered with sandal paste and crowned with flowers. His legs were crossed under him, and in that posture he was buried, according to the custom observed in the burial of Hindu hermits. The ordinary Hindu is not buried, but cremated in the burning-ground. Hindu hermits, however, are not burnt, but buried, seated in the posture in which they sit meditating during life. One peculiar rite in the funeral ceremonies of hermits is that their skulls are broken with a conch-shell. In the present case the Brahmins in attendance decided that this ceremony must be omitted, as the hermit's skull had already been broken by the tiger's paw. A lump of sugar was placed above his head, and that, instead of his skull, was broken with the conch-shell. A stick with three crooks was duly placed in his hand, and

for the last time his disciple, as chief mourner, placed his hand reverently on his master's breast, eyebrows, and head. Finally, the grave was filled with salt, and covered with earth and stones. Perhaps the holiday visitor from the far west may stumble over his cairn on the race-course of Olympia, and wonder for what purpose the stones were piled so high. After the burial was over, no lamentation was allowed, for a hermit's death is a subject for glorification, and confers merit on the chief mourner and all who are present at the funeral.

CHAPTER VI

RETURN TO CHAUK

FOR twelve or thirteen days Nettaji performed, under the guidance of the Brahmins, the ceremonies due to the memory of his dead master. When all rites had been duly performed, one morning early he left the Panther's Cave, to return to the world that he had left two years before. In accordance with the instructions given him by the hermit, he was first to go to Chauk. After receiving

the blessing of his father and mother, he was to mount the Ghauts to the Dekkan, and proceed to the hill-fortress of Torna, where he would receive in some mysterious way enlightenment as to what further steps he should take in order that he might fulfil his destiny, according to the will of the great gods

He took with him from the mountain the sword and the long spear of the hermit. The kindly hill-folk supplied him with milk and rice, in case he should feel hungry on the way. It was not without a natural feeling of regret that he left his beautiful asylum on the mountain-top, where he had so long enjoyed peace and health, and the companionship of the noble hermit. Indeed, Matheran is so lovely, that anyone who can go away from its leafy precincts, nor cast one lingering, longing look behind, must be indeed dull of soul.

Nettaji did not take long to descend the stone steps of Jacob's Ladder. He soon found himself on the plain, and turned his face to Chauk and the house of his father and mother, whom he had not seen since the day when in the darkness of early morning he had gone away from the village to become the hermit's

disciple. The change from boyhood to manhood that he had undergone in the interval would make it difficult for any of his old acquaintances to recognize him, especially as no one knew that he was alive except his father and mother and the one faithful servant who had consigned him to the hermit's care. Nevertheless he did not consider it safe to go to his father's house without disguise. The man whom he had slain was a Bijapur noble of high rank, and a large price had been put on the head of his slayer. There were spies in the pay of the Bijapur government in every village. It was therefore advisable, if not for his own, at any rate for his parents' sake, that the fiction of his death should be still maintained.

So he entered Chauk with his face smeared with ashes, and with his begging-bowl in his hand and the skin of an antelope over his shoulders, like a wandering hermit. From house to house he held out his bowl for alms until he came to his father's door on the outskirts of the village. Here, without revealing his disguise, he asked Yesaji, his father's old servant, who had taken him up Matheran Hill two years ago, for permission to sleep through

the night under the mango-tree in the enclosure round the house. This permission was readily accorded to him, and attracted no inconvenient attention in the minds of the villagers, as many wandering hermits had before taken shelter under that mango-tree, in a hut constructed for that very purpose by Nettaji's father.

He had not been long settled in the hut, when his father and mother came out to see if they could do anything to promote the comfort of their guest. Then, as there were no witnesses present, the son revealed himself to his parents, knelt down before them, and implored their blessing. Overjoyed to see their dear son back again, they kissed him tenderly on the forehead and greeted him with smiles and tears of joy.

They had so much to say to each other that Orion had passed the zenith before the conversation was ended and they retired to rest. Nettaji told the story of his life on the mountain to the day when the hermit fell dead beneath the tiger's paw. His parents in turn told him that all their efforts to discover what had become of Gunga had proved fruitless. Kashi no longer lived in the village of

Chauk. Her father had been suspected, not without reason, of being in alliance with Shivaji, a young Maratha chief, who had, in defiance of the Bijapur government, seized Torna, Rajgad, Sinhgad, Purandhar, Rajmachi, and other hill-forts to the south, west, and north-west of Poona, and was looked upon by many Marathas as the destined saviour of Maharashtra. To escape the Bijapur officers sent to arrest him, Kashi's father had taken his daughter and his treasures to Rajmachi, a strong mountain fortress, whose battlements may still be seen frowning over the railway that climbs the Ghaut on the way from Bombay to Poona. It was rumoured that a strong force from Bijapur was advancing to recover the lost hill-forts, and especially Rajmachi, which commanded the route from the Dekkan to Kalyan, the most important centre of Bijapur power in the neighbourhood.

When Nettaji heard that Rajmachi was threatened with attack, and that the girl companion of his childhood and her father were in danger, he could not be persuaded to remain long inactive in the hut provided by his father for the shelter of wandering hermits. Early on the afternoon of the following day

he took leave of his parents, to join the defenders of Rajmachi and warn them of the danger with which they were threatened. Eagerly he embraced the first opportunity of engaging in the work for which he had been dedicated by the hermit of Matheran, and of striking a blow for the freedom of Maharashtra and the temples of the Hindu gods. He was also moved at the same time by gentler feelings—by love for his little playmate Kashi, whom he had from his earliest years looked upon as his destined bride. If she, like his sister, should be captured and carried away to die, or be immured in some distant Mahometan harem, he felt that, instead of being a pure-minded patriot working for the liberation of his native land, he would be converted into a demon, with room for nothing in his soul but eager longing for revenge.

CHAPTER VII

CAPTURE OF AYUB KHAN

HIS route to Rajmachī lay by the village of Khapoli, in whose pretty tank now repose abandoned British guns, to Khandala, where the Great Indian Peninsula Railway first emerges at the top of the Ghauts. He was still disguised as a hermit, and bore the antelope's skin on his broad shoulders. His good sword was concealed as far as possible. The great spear of his master, the hermit, which he held in his hand, was likely to attract little attention, as the country was overrun by fierce beasts and fiercer men, against whom his supposed sacred calling would be no protection.

When Nettaji reached the top, he saw a tall cavalier on a large horse looking down on the valley below. The stranger's bright armour glittered in the rays of the setting sun, and his beard showed that he was a follower of the prophet. In loud and insulting tones he called upon Nettaji to approach.

"Vile follower of gods that are no gods," he cried, "come hither and tell me what I

ask you, if you wish to retain the life in your ash-smeared carcass ”

Nettaji, instead of bending low to the ground, walked straight up to the insolent cavalier, who shrank back involuntarily on seeing his proud bearing and the great spear that he held in his hand. The momentary tremor revealed his want of courage. However, he still attempted to daunt Nettaji by his blustering manner, and called out to him

“Tell me at once, son of a burnt father, where stands the Fort of Rajmachi, the idolatrous defenders of which shall be driven out of their stronghold this very night by me, Ayub Khan, and the other bold warriors of Islam encamped on yonder hill-side. Refuse to obey me and I will make my good steed, Abu Jan, trample you under his hoofs ”

Nettaji laid his hand on the horse's bridle, and replied

“Before you fulfil your proud boast and plant your victorious standard on the lofty walls of Rajmachi, you must first cross swords with the poor servant of the mighty gods who now stands before you. So dismount from your horse that we may face each other on

equal terms on foot, and see to which of us the gods will give the victory ”

This proposal, however, by no means pleased the cavalier who called himself Ayub Khan. He too well appreciated the advantage of being mounted on a high horse, which not only lifted him almost beyond the reach of his adversary's sword, but also provided him with the means of flight if he should feel disposed to flee. So he spurred his horse with the object of shaking off Nettaji's hand from the bridle. Nettaji, however, held the bridle fast, and in the struggle the frightened horse threw its perhaps equally frightened rider to the ground.

The advantage of position now belonged to Nettaji, who did not follow the unchivalrous example of the other. He raised his fallen enemy from the ground and bade him draw his sword and defend himself. Ayub Khan, however, woefully rubbed his right shoulder and let his right arm droop limply by his side, saying in a tone very different from that in which he had spoken

“ Brave hermit, my sword-arm is disabled, and you will not, I am sure, harm an enemy who cannot defend himself ”

Nettaji, though chivalrous, was no fool. He did not believe that the Mahometan's arm was really very much hurt by the fall off his horse. So he took away his sword, and said to him

"You asked me a few minutes ago the way to Rajmachi. I will not only show you where Rajmachi is, but accompany you there myself. So prepare for a long walk over the mountains, unless you wish the kites and vultures to have a rich feast on your flesh."

Ayub Khan had not the face to pretend that his legs, as well as his arm, were disabled. So he tried the effect of rich promises, and offered Nettaji a ransom of many rupees if he would let him go free.

"A ransom you may give me," replied Nettaji, "but we will arrange the amount to be paid when I have got you safe inside the ramparts of Rajmachi, which you are so eager to enter. There is the double peak of Rajmachi straight in front of us, but how am I to guide you there when I do not myself know the way? Ah!" he continued, looking round, "there is your horse, and a man holding it, who will probably be able to direct our steps."

The countryman who held the horse readily agreed to lead our hero to Rajmachi. He was a young active man in the usual dress of a Maratha peasant. He said that his name was Rama, and that he knew well all the mountain paths. The easiest route to Rajmachi would have been through Khandalla and by a level path for ten miles along the edge of the Dekkan table-land. If, however, they went that way, they would be in great danger of being captured by the Mahometan force encamped at Khandalla. It would therefore be safer to make for Rajmachi as straight as the crow flies, although this would involve going two thousand feet down into a deep valley and climbing two thousand feet up on the other side. By this route they would reach Rajmachi as quickly as by the more beaten track through Khandalla and along the edge of the Ghaut.

But what was to be done with Ayub Khan's fine horse? It could not possibly be taken with them by the short cut across the deep valley. Seeing the difficulty, the countryman, who appeared by his bright eye and animated features to be a man of intelligence, remarked.

“I have an honest friend living in yonder house who will keep the horse for you, and give him back to you safe and sound, unless the Mahometans come in the meantime and take him away with them”

There was nothing to be done but to follow the peasant's advice, which at least offered some chance of recovering the horse. So Nettaji with his captive went with Rama to a farmstead close by, the owner of which willingly agreed to take charge of the horse, only stipulating that he should be allowed to use it, and should not be held responsible if it were seized by robbers or soldiers.

So the horse was left in the farmstead, and the three began to descend the mountain path, Rama first, then Ayub Khan, and last of all Nettaji, who kept a sharp eye on his captive lest he should attempt to escape. However, no such attempt was made. The Mahometan resigned himself to his position with the fatalism of his creed, only groaning over the roughness of the path as they descended, and still more over its steepness when they began to ascend the other side of the valley. He was stout, and more used to riding than walking, so that the climbing was pain and grief to

him, and he required one or two admonitory pricks from Nettaji's spear before he was brought up to the gate of Rajmachi

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROYAL TERRACE

WHEN they arrived before the gate of Rajmachi, they were challenged by the sentry on guard, and not admitted until they satisfied him of their friendliness. It was now quite dark, and their countenances were carefully scanned by the light of a torch to see whether they really were what they pretended to be. After the scrutiny was over, Nettaji demanded to be led immediately to the commandant of the fort.

"He has retired for the night," replied the sentry, "and I dare not venture to disturb him."

"My news," replied Nettaji, "is so important that it cannot be kept till morning."

"Tell me what you have to say," replied the sentry, "and I will see whether it is

weighty enough to justify me in waking Trimbak Rao ”

“To none other than Trimbak Rao himself will I tell my news, and if you refuse any longer to take me to him, I will make my way to his presence by force ”

Daunted by these threatening words the sentry yielded, and led Nettaji in the direction of the commandant's apartments, leaving the other two at the gate in charge of some other Maratha soldiers, who had now appeared on the scene.

Trimbak Rao was at first very angry indeed at being roused from his slumbers. He overwhelmed the unfortunate sentry with a profusion of Maratha oaths, and could scarcely be restrained by Nettaji from giving him a good beating on the spot. His anger was then diverted to the stranger

“Who are you, where do you come from, and what do you want at this unseemly hour?” he said

On being informed that the fort under his command was threatened with attack on the following morning, his anger gave place to consternation, and he hastily ordered all the officers of the garrison to be summoned to

his presence. He had, indeed, good reason to be alarmed at the prospect of attack, seeing that, two or three days before, half of the defenders of the fort had been called away to the Konkan plain below to take part in some operations that Shivaji was directing against the Bijapur troops in the neighbourhood of the town of Kalyan. The number of fighting men left behind in the fort would scarcely be sufficient to man the ramparts.

However, it was necessary that Trimbak Rao should do his best with such forces as he had at his disposal. Thanks to Nettaji's timely arrival, he had the advantage of being forewarned, and therefore forearmed. He immediately gave orders that all the garrison should be turned out to mend the weak points in the wall. Unfortunately Trimbak Rao had been dilatory, and when he had had plenty of time and men to do the work, had not performed his obvious duty of strengthening the many weak points in the walls of the fort, so that Rama, drawing upon the plentiful resources of the proverbial philosophy at the command of the shrewd Maratha peasantry, compared him to one who began to put up a wedding-awning after the wedding procession

had reached the house, or who yoked his bullocks to the oil-mill when he wanted oil for his lamp, or began to dig a well when he was thirsty. The Mahometan attack was to be expected on the following morning, and little could be done in one dark night to put the walls in a proper state of repair. However, what could be done in such a short time was done, and in the early morning the small and weary garrison awaited the approach of the enemy.

While these preparations were going on, Nettaji had an interview with Dattaji, Kashi's father, in which he urged him to flee with his daughter before morning, so that she might not be carried away by the Mahometans as his sister Gunga had been two years before. He showed the old man that the small garrison of Rajmachi could not long hold out, and unless unexpectedly relieved by Shivaji, would soon be compelled to surrender. He himself would not be able to accompany them in their flight, but he would send as their guide Rama, who had given good evidence of his faithfulness and of his intimate knowledge of every mountain path.

There was no denying the cogency of

Nettaji's arguments Dattaji immediately gave orders to the few retainers who were with him to prepare for their sudden departure. For a few moments Nettaji saw his former playmate Kashi, who had, since he last saw her, grown from a pretty little girl into a beautiful woman. They reminded each other of the happy hours of childhood, when they played by the waters of the Dhauri. With wondering glances of admiration she looked at the tall warrior, whom she could scarcely believe to be her boy lover of years gone by, and heartily she applauded his resolve to devote his life to the deliverance of Maharashtra. Then they parted once more, Nettaji going to assist in the repairing of the defences, and Kashi with her father and Rama issuing from the gate of the fortress to escape before the Bijapur force arrived to besiege it. But short as the interview was, it sufficed to confirm the fancy of Nettaji's boyhood, and he made a solemn vow that none but Kashi should ever be his bride.

The mountain on which the fort of Rajmachhi is built projects from the main line of the Ghauts, with which it is connected by a tongue of land three hundred yards broad

Across this natural causeway was built a strong stone wall seventeen feet high and eight feet thick. In the wall were loopholes for muskets and openings for cannon, but unfortunately the garrison had few muskets, and the three small cannon mounted on the bastions were so old and rusty that they were more likely to burst than to do much damage to the enemy. Elsewhere the mountain of Rajmachī is so steep that it needed little protection from art, but in those parts in which it is less precipitous it was defended by a wall. The mountain derives its name of Rajmachī (the Royal Terrace) from the splendid prospect it commands over the great Konkan plain in the west, and of the bold mountain-wall of the Ghauts on the east. The mountain has two peaks about half a mile apart, each separately fortified, the eastern and higher one called Shrivardhan, or Wealth's Increase, and the lower one on the west, looking down on the Konkan, called Manranjan, or the Heart Gladdener. These two inner fortresses were like the donjon-keeps of Norman castles, and provided a refuge for the garrison in case the wall across the causeway, which constituted their first

line of defence, should be captured by the enemy.

CHAPTER IX

ASSAULT ON RAJMACHI

BY the first light of dawn the enemy could be dimly discerned making their way along the edge of the Ghauts. They evidently intended to capture the fort by surprise, and it was determined if possible to turn the tables and surprise them by giving them an unexpectedly warm reception. Trim-bak Rao gave orders to his men to be ready behind the wall with their muskets loaded, but to give no indication of their presence there. To increase the appearance of absolute freedom from apprehension of attack, a few goats and sheep were allowed to remain outside the wall. When the Bijapur commander saw these animals quietly grazing, and no sign of any defenders on the wall, he called upon his bravest followers to rush forward with ladders and scale the wall before the garrison was roused to the consciousness of its danger.

Some fifty men promptly responded to the

call, in spite of the fatigue that they had been subjected to during their long march through the night. They were allowed to approach within ten yards of the wall, when Trimbak Rao gave the signal to fire. Immediately a volley of bullets and arrows was poured upon the assailants, half of whom fell dead or wounded to the ground. Before they could recover from their surprise a second volley was poured into them, and then they fled, leaving their fallen comrades stretched on the ground in front of the wall.

After this sharp lesson the Mahometans were more cautious in approaching the fort. They had to send a flag of truce to ask permission to remove their dead and wounded, which was granted them. They then put into position their cannon to batter down the wall. The Marathas attempted to reply with their old rusty guns, but one of them burst immediately, and the range of the others was not nearly equal to that of the guns cast in the famous foundries of Bijapur. In this unfortunate position of affairs the garrison was helpless. No active resistance could be offered, and there was little doubt that in a very short time a practicable breach would be effected.

The Bijapur gunners worked their guns steadily for several hours unmolested by the garrison, and before the day was far advanced, the Mahometan commander thought that part of the wall was sufficiently demolished to warrant a second assault. His soldiers in the meantime had rested and refreshed themselves and partly recovered from their fatigue, so that they were in a fit state to make a determined attack.

The command of the storming-party was entrusted to a negro of great stature, with a chest like a chimpanzee, who was reputed to be the strongest man in the Bijapur army. He advanced to the attack, waving his scimitar, and protected by a huge shield that two ordinary men could hardly have carried. The bullets, arrows, and missiles that laid low several of his followers as they rushed on, missed him, or glanced harmlessly off his shield. Unharmed he reached the breach, the defenders of which instinctively drew back before this formidable opponent, crying out, "This is no human warrior, but a devouring rakshasa¹." Netṭaji, however, who led the defenders of the breach, shot an arrow which

¹ rakshasa = demon

grazed his leg, and, pointing to the red stream flowing over his black skin, exclaimed, "See, he is no Ravana¹ or Kumbhakarana, but a man of flesh and blood like ourselves"

Shamed by these words, the Marathas stood boldly by the side of Nettaji in the breach, and faced the rush of their assailants led on by the negro, who was rather infuriated than injured by the slight wound he had received. The terrible scimitar of the black was already dyed with the blood of two Marathas before Nettaji was able to get at him. Then began a combat between the two leaders, at which for a time their followers looked on with wondering eyes, so absorbed in admiration of the combatants that they forgot that it was their duty to take part in the struggle. The negro rushed forward with seemingly irresistible might, hoping to overthrow his opponent by his superior weight. Nettaji was compelled to retire two or three steps before this tremendous onset. But as he withdrew, he coolly defended himself and waited for a favourable opportunity of striking his foe,

¹ Ravana was the king of Ceylon slain by Rama. Kumbhakarana was his brother. They were both demons of monstrous size and shape.



“THE NEGRO RUSHED FORWARD WITH SEEMINGLY IRRESISTIBLE
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whose ungovernable fury was likely to throw him off his guard, for he was foaming with rage, stamping on the ground, and uttering horrible imprecations. All the while Nettaji remained calm and collected, praying to the gods to help him in this his first fight for them and for Maharashtra. Soon his chance came. The negro, in his insensate fury at finding all his blows parried, regardless of the necessity of defence, began to wave his scimitar like the sails of a windmill. Immediately Nettaji stepped forward, and with a sudden sweep of his sword inflicted a deep wound in his adversary's exposed right side. Unchecked by his wound the negro showered a rapid succession of blows upon Nettaji, who protected himself under the shield that he had taken from his captive, Ayub Khan. And well was it for him that that shield was of the finest temper, for this his first day of battle for Maharashtra would also have been his last. At last, from weariness and loss of blood the negro's blows became weaker and weaker, and Nettaji was able to resume the offensive. Coming to close quarters under the protection of his shield, he dropped his sword, and, seizing his dagger, drove it up to the hilt in the heart of his

enemy, who sank dead to the ground without a groan. In the meantime the Marathas, from the advantage of their higher position, had succeeded in driving the assailants down from the breach, and the overthrow of their leader appalled them so that they had no spirit to renew the assault

CHAPTER X

WITHDRAWAL TO SHRIVARDHAN

FOR the time being the Mahometans were foiled. But it was evident that the defence of the whole of Rajmachi could not long be maintained, against the far superior number of the enemy, by the attenuated garrison, which had become still weaker by the loss of four or five men in the recent attack. The breach would soon be made wider, and attempts would be made to scale the precipices on the north, south, and west. To defend such a large circuit with a force of not more than a hundred men was obviously impossible. It was therefore determined to give up the defence of the outer wall and retire to the

fortified peak of Shrivardhan, that rises abruptly on the east to the height of six hundred feet above the level of the plateau. In that height, strongly fortified as it was by nature and by art, the garrison might reasonably hope to defy the attacks of the enemy as long as their provisions held out. And by this change of plan the smallness of their numbers would be converted from a disadvantage into an advantage, as it would enable them to subsist longer on the stores of grain that had been collected in the granaries. There were springs of pure water filling the tanks inside the walls of Shrivardhan, so that the garrison would be in no danger of suffering from thirst. Thus they might hold out for several months in the hope of being eventually relieved by Shivaji.

But how was Shivaji to be informed of the straits to which his faithful followers in Rajmachī had been reduced?

“Let me go and seek him,” exclaimed Netaji, who did not like the idea of being cooped up in the narrow limits of Shrivardhan, however broad and beautiful might be the prospect that it commanded of the plain of the Konkan, and of the woody tops of Prabhul and dearly-loved Matheran.

Trimbak Rao gladly accepted his offer. In truth he was somewhat jealous of Nettaji, who by his victory over the negro, one of the most redoubted champions in the army of Bijapur, had won for himself a high reputation. All the garrison recognized that in him Maharashtra had found a heroic defender, and they were more inclined to look to him than to the commandant of the fort as their leader in the hour of danger. So Trimbak Rao was not sorry that Nettaji should depart.

The retirement to the fortified peak of Shrivardhan was effected without interruption, before the besiegers had time to recover from their repulse and from the consternation caused by the death of their negro champion. The Mahometans had resumed their cannonade against the outer wall, and, ignorant that it was no longer defended, went on battering it for some time after the Marathas had retired safely inside the battlements of Shrivardhan. Presently they discovered what had happened, and, passing over the breach, took possession of Manranjan and pitched most of their tents on the plateau to the south-west of the two peaks, leaving

a detachment to guard the outer wall, which was now in their undisputed possession

Nettaji resolved that very night to make his attempt to slip through the hostile lines. Nothing was to be gained by delay, and it was desirable that Shivaji should be informed of the state of affairs at Rajmachi as soon as possible. His plan was to put on the armour of his captive, Ayub Khan, so that he might look like a Mahometan soldier, and to trust that the darkness of night would prevent his disguise from being detected. He thought that the danger of being discovered might be diminished by his having a conversation with Ayub Khan, and obtaining from him such information about the hostile commander and his forces as might be useful if he were forced to speak to any of the Mahometan soldiers. So he went, about sunset, to the small chamber in Shrivardhan in which his prisoner was confined.

Ayub Khan was in a very bad temper, and did not conceal his indignation at the treatment he had received.

"Here I am," he said, "the brother-in-law of the great Muhammad Adil Shah, king of Bijapur, and I am fed upon coarse grain and

treated with no more regard than if I were a common soldier ”

This was for Nettaji interesting news, which Ayub Khan, if he had been more prudent, would have been careful not to divulge. The brother-in-law of Muhammad Adil Shah, however deficient he might be in warlike courage, was an important captive for whom a large ransom might reasonably be demanded. Nettaji, however, kept this source of satisfaction to himself, and replied

“ If you have not received the honour befitting your high rank, I will gladly speak to Trimbak Rao, and ask him to see that you are treated with proper respect, and given such comforts as can be supplied to a prisoner in a besieged fortress.”

“ That, then, was the meaning of the cannon-shots I heard ! ” exclaimed Ayub. “ I knew that the noble Hafiz Khan would soon come with his troops to drive you Maratha rats out of your holes in the mountain of Raj-machi ”

“ Think you,” asked Nettaji, “ that Hafiz Khan is strong enough to capture such a fortress as this ? What artillery has he to batter down the walls ? ”

“He has with him six of the best guns that the state foundry of Bijapur can produce. There are also with him sappers to mine the walls, and, when assaults are made, they will be led by the black, Sidi Hassan, who, as long as I remain captive, has no rival among the soldiers of my brother, Muhammad Adil Shah, for strength of arm and courage.”

Nettaji smiled at the boaster's folly in thinking that he could by his words impose upon one who had had actual experience of his poltroonery. He forebore, however, to express the scorn he felt, as he had no wish to humble and insult his captive. He contented himself with enquiring whether any other Bijapur troops were taking part in the campaign.

“No doubt,” he said, “the force of Hafiz Khan is strong. But the event of battles depends upon the will of the high gods. If he should be defeated, has he any reserves to fall back upon?”

“He neither has nor requires any other army to support him. He will sweep the Dekkan, and capture one after another every fort that the robber Shivaji has seized. Another army of equal power is next month to

descend into the Konkan, and will march triumphantly to Kalyan, punishing all rebels on the way”

This was information of some importance, as it gave Nettaji the assurance that, if he could once get through the Mahometan besiegers of Rajmachi, he would have the coast clear before him. He then tried to elicit from Ayub Khan the watchword most commonly employed by Hafiz Khan's army, but in this attempt he was unsuccessful. Although Ayub Khan was a boaster, and not over-wise, he had sufficient sense to prevent him from revealing a secret which might be of such service to the enemy.

Nettaji then went to say farewell to Trimbak Rao. He did not forget his promise to do his best to secure for his captive such treatment as was due to his rank. Trimbak Rao then informed him that he had carefully measured the provisions they had in store, and calculated that they would be able to hold out for six weeks, if the besiegers failed in the meanwhile to storm the walls of Shrivaidhan. He had every reason to hope that he would be able to repulse all assaults, as the walls were so high that they could

scarcely be hit by cannon in position on the plateau below, and the foundation of solid rock would be very difficult to undermine

“Bring Shivaji here within six weeks,” he concluded, “and you will find our orange standard still flying on the top of Shrivaidhan ”

CHAPTER XI

NETTAJI LEAVES RAJMACHI

BY this time it was quite dark, and without further delay Nettaji started on his perilous enterprise. His disguise as a Mahometan soldier gave him the advantage of going fully armed, so that he had the satisfaction of knowing that he was not likely to be slain or captured without having a chance of striking a good stroke in defence of his life and liberty

“For the rest,” he said to himself, “a man must endure that which is written on his forehead ”

His first difficulty was to steal unobserved down to the plateau on which the main body of the Mahometans was now encamped, so that he might mingle with the Bijapur soldiery, as

if he were one of themselves. At one point the fort of Shrivardhan came so near to the edge of the plateau that the Mahometans could not pass by it without being dangerously exposed to the missiles of the garrison. Here, too, there were growing on the rock several trees, under the shadow of which he climbed down unseen. Then, still keeping himself carefully under the shade of the trees, he walked and crept close up to the nearest Mahometan tents.

Luckily the besiegers had not yet quite settled down in their new positions. They were so busy arranging themselves, and making preparations for their evening meal, that they had neglected to take the precaution of posting sentries. The Marathas, like ourselves and the ancient Romans, have a proverb telling them that fate is propitious to courage. In this case Nettaji saw that valour might be the better part of discretion, and walked into the middle of the enemy as unconcernedly as if he were one of their officers. His bold policy was entirely successful. None of the many soldiers, busy pitching their tents or preparing their savoury curries and pulaos,¹

¹ Pulaos = dishes of meat cooked with rice, raisins, and spices

took any notice of the tall soldier, who walked past them with a swift step, as if he were engaged on urgent business. A momentary glance of admiration on account of his soldierly bearing and the fineness of his armour was all that his passage through their ranks attracted.

In this way he passed without impediment right on to the wall across the causeway or ridge leading to the main line of the Ghauts. Strange to say, he might have got right away without the least interference, but for something that happened when he was outside this wall, and to all intents and purposes free to go wherever he pleased.

Here he saw two Maratha peasants being driven into the camp by four soldiers. They were heavily laden with the great bundles of grass that they bore in Indian fashion on their heads. They were manifestly exhausted by the weight of fodder that they carried, but nevertheless the Mahometans, who followed them, pricked them mercilessly with the points of their spears whenever they appeared to be disposed to slacken their pace. The sweat poured from their brows and chests, and in the humblest terms they prayed their oppressors to show them mercy.

Nettaji could not endure to see his poor fellow-countrymen thus maltreated. Without a moment's thought of his own danger he strode up to the soldiers and ordered them to desist from their cruelty.

For a moment they were cowed by his commanding voice and the high rank which seemed to be indicated by his rich armour. Presently, however, one of them plucked up courage to growl savagely

"We are only doing our duty, and bringing in fodder for our horses. These cow-worshipping Hindus are mere beasts of burden, and why should we not goad them on like lazy oxen?"

"I will report your conduct to Hafiz Khan, and you will be deservedly scourged for your ill-treatment of men whom the King of Bijapur regards as his subjects and worthy of his protection."

At this the rough soldiers laughed aloud, and their spokesman replied

"The idea of reporting us to Hafiz Khan for letting these lazy hinds taste the point of our spears. Did he not himself yesterday scourge a dozen of them in the village of Khandalla because they would not tell him

where they had hidden their grain? And who are you that give us orders? You do not speak like a true believer or a man of Bijapur”

Just at this moment one of the soldiers, who held a lantern, flashed it in Nettareji's face, and saw the caste mark which he had forgotten to remove from his brow

“This is no Mahometan, but a cursed Maratha spy!” he cried, and drew his sword, in which action he was followed by his companions Nettareji immediately put himself in a posture of defence, and called upon the two peasants to run for their lives. The two men, however, although with the pliancy of their nation and their religion they had yielded to circumstances and abased themselves before their oppressors, were no cowards, and were by no means disposed to desert the champion who had so boldly stood forth in their defence. They threw down their bundles between themselves and the soldiers, extracted from them the long heavy sticks on which they had supported these bundles, and, thus armed, arrayed themselves on the right and left hand of Nettareji

The soldiers were daunted at finding that

suddenly they had to deal with three resolute men, one of whom at least seemed a redoubtable warrior. Instead of pushing their way over the bundles of hay to the attack, they preferred the safer policy of standing on their defence and shouting for assistance at the top of their voices. An immediate response was made to their call, and shouts and footsteps were heard proceeding from the gate in the middle of the wall.

“Charge!” cried Nettaji, and called upon the two peasants to join him in the attack. But the man who stood on his right hand pulled him back, and exclaiming “Follow me!” darted off the main path down a side track trodden by the oxen that grazed there. The other peasant followed, and so did Nettaji after a moment’s hesitation. He did not like the idea of running away, but just as he had recently proved that valour is sometimes the better part of discretion, so now he clearly realized that he was in a position in which discretion was the better part of valour. If he remained, he was sure to be captured or killed, and he would probably be able to fight no more battles for Maharashtra, and would certainly be prevented from carrying to Shivaji

the news of the danger with which one of his most important forts was threatened. All this flashed through Nettareji's brain far more quickly than it can be written down, and he fled on the tracks of the flying peasants.

A large number of Mahometan soldiers rushed in pursuit. But the night was dark, and, as the Maratha proverb says, "there is one path for the flier. twelve for the pursuer" The pursuers could not see the fugitives, and, naturally shrinking from the downward path that might lead them to dangerous precipices, either ran along the main path on the top, or close beside it. The peasants, who knew every foot of the ground, plunged down the side of the hill for about two hundred feet, followed by Nettareji, who, encumbered by the weight of his armour, had great difficulty in keeping up with them. They then turned at a more leisurely pace towards the east, following a cattle track that ran parallel with the main path. After proceeding for a mile or two they came to a clump of trees that afforded them good shelter from the wind. There, as they had evidently shaken off their pursuers, they persuaded Nettareji to rest for the night, and they all lay down to sleep,

covering themselves up with dry leaves to keep out the cold

CHAPTER XII

SHIVAJI AND MOROBA

WHEN the earliest chirping of the birds roosting on the mango-trees under which he had found shelter announced the approach of dawn, Nettareji awoke and roused his companions. In reply to his enquiry they informed him that they did not know where Shivaji was. He was reported, when they last heard of him, to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Poona, but his movements were so rapid, and sometimes so carefully concealed, that it was very difficult to know where to look for him. Nettareji's best course, if he wished to obtain precise information, would be to go to Lohogad, Shivaji's nearest stronghold, which was not more than sixteen or seventeen miles distant.

So to Lohogad Nettareji determined to go. The brightest stars were just beginning to fade in the sky, when, guided by his two

companions, he started in the direction of Khandalla. As the light rapidly grew stronger and restored to nature her bright variety of colours, Nettaji found that their course lay along a great natural veranda commanding a magnificent view of the plain of the Konkan. Before them towered a conspicuous mountain peak of grotesque shape, which now in the days of English rule bears the name of the Duke's Nose, from its fancied resemblance to the most prominent feature in the face of the great soldier who long afterwards broke the power of the Marathas at Assaye and Argaum. But at this time it was only known as the Nagphani or Cobia's Hood.

At Khandalla Nettaji turned aside to go to the farm where Ayub Khan's horse had been left. He half expected to find that the poor farmer had disappeared with the valuable horse, which was no doubt worth far more than all he possessed or could reasonably expect to make by fair means. Great, then, was his satisfaction to find the horse safe and sound and well fed. The farmer also gave interesting information about Kashi and her father, whom Rama had led to his farmstead. They had passed the night there to rest after

the fatigue of their hurried flight from Raj-machi, and in the morning early had started for Lohogad

Nettaji, after a short halt for rest and refreshment, gave the farmer his due meed of praise for his hospitality and honesty, and mounting on the charger's back resumed his journey to Lohogad. The two peasants had now left him, but he had no difficulty in finding his way, as his route lay along a well-marked track, afterwards known as the Peishwa's road

Nettaji's experience of horseflesh had hitherto been limited to the small and hardy country-bred ponies that he had ridden as a boy in his native village of Chauk. He had always been very fond of horses and riding, but the poverty of his family had never allowed him much opportunity of gratifying his taste. What was now his joy and pride to find himself mounted on one of the noblest horses that had ever been brought from Arabia to the horse-market of Bijapur! Abu Jan was fresh after its confinement to the stall in Khandalla farm-steading, and pranced and curvetted in a way that would have disconcerted a less active rider. But Nettaji gracefully accom-

modated himself to all the horse's movements, and took keen delight in the signs of high mettle that it manifested. After the rough hill-ponies that he had been used to ride, the joints of the supple Arab seemed to be made of india-rubber, and the saddle felt as soft and easy as a cushioned divan. No wonder that, thus mounted on the noble beast he had won from a captured prince, Nettaji went on his way exulting in the pride of youth, and strength, and high aspirations.

It was not long before he saw, sticking up in the sky before him, the outwork of Lohogad called the Scorpion's Sting, and knew that he was near that famous fortress, which is old enough to be mentioned by Ptolemy, and is one of the strongest of the hill-forts in the Dekkan. At this point a man rushed forward suddenly from a thick clump of trees by the roadside, and, seizing his bridle-rein, called out in a loud voice

"For the love of God help, noble cavalier, if you have any compassion for the oppressed!"

What was Nettaji's surprise to recognize in his suppliant the features and short, thick-set figure of Rama!

"Why do you call upon me for help?" he

exclaimed, "and where have you left Kashi and her father? Who has wronged you?"

Rama, equally surprised at recognizing Nettaji, told what had happened. They had been waylaid by a band of robbers, who had taken them to a neighbouring cave. Rama had managed to escape from his bonds, and was hiding in a wood for fear that they might see and recapture him.

The news of the capture of Kashi and her father was a terrible blow to Nettaji. It appeared as if the evil fortune that had assailed him in his boyhood still dogged his footsteps. The band of robbers, he was informed, numbered about a hundred men, and what could he, even with the assistance of Rama, do against so many. However, something had to be tried, hopeless though the attempt might seem. So he bade Rama lead him straight to the robber's cave.

They had not proceeded far before they came upon two men, who were conversing by the roadside under the shade of a mango-tree. One was an old gosain or ascetic, who sat cross-legged at the foot of the tree. The other was a young Hindu warrior, who stood in front of him, holding in his hand a strong

country - bred horse of the famous Bhimthuri breed, which looked as if it were capable of enduring any amount of labour in travelling the rough rocky tracks of its native Dekkan. The young warrior himself was of no great stature, but lithe and active as a panther. His nose was slightly prominent, his eyes were remarkably bright, and he wore a beard in the Rajput fashion. His countenance was full of animation, and at first sight Nettare felt drawn towards him by a mysterious magnetic attraction.

Nettare was the first to speak.

"What men are ye," he said, "whom I see thus quietly conversing by the wayside in a land stained with lawless deeds and ground down by oppression?"

To this question a surprising reply was given by the old ascetic.

"We are not men, but gods," he said. "For know, Nettare Palkar, that I am Moroba of Chinchvad, in whose frail body the great god Ganpati dwells, and in the bodies of whose descendants he has promised to dwell for seven generations. Know also that my companion is an incarnation of the still mightier god Shiva, who, pitying the sorrows

of Maharashtia, has assumed the form of a mortal to relieve her people from oppression. Before you stands Shivaji, your king, who has been waiting for you here since sunrise, for the goddess Bhavani has apprised him of your coming, and told him that without the aid of Nettaji Palkar, the pupil of the hermit of Matheran, he cannot free his country."

Nettaji was overcome with surprise at the extraordinary revelation that had been made to him by the old man, who, by his knowledge of his name and antecedents, seemed really endowed with supernatural power. He turned enquiringly for further enlightenment to Shivaji, who said

"What Moroba says of himself is quite true. He worshipped Ganpati with such devotion that the god performed a miracle in his favour, and promised to live in him and his descendants for seven generations. Since then he himself has been endowed with miraculous powers, to which I can myself bear witness, for he cured my eyesight without the aid of drug or lotion. As for myself, I have strange dreams by night and visions by day, in which the great gods appear to me and direct my conduct. Last

night the goddess Bhavani appeared to me, and told me that I must wait here for a warrior coming from Khandalla and go with him to Torna. Sometimes, indeed, I feel as if I were inspired by some god residing in my breast. But whether this be so or not, it is assuredly my destiny to live, and perhaps to die, for the liberties of Maharashtra.”

Nettaji replied that he too had devoted himself body and soul to the same cause, and, bending down, offered Shivaji his allegiance. Shivaji raised him from the ground, and, in token of the compact of eternal friendship and devotion to the same great cause, exchanged turbans with him.

Nettaji then informed Shivaji of what had taken place at Rajmachi, and of the capture of Kashi and her father by a band of robbers. Both pieces of news were heavy tidings for Shivaji. Rajmachi was one of his strongest fortresses, and very important for its position commanding the Bhore pass and the route to the Bijapur provincial capital of Kalyan. Dattaji, the father of Kashi, was, on account of his wealth and influence, a powerful supporter.

“What am I to do?” he said, half soliloquizing and half addressing himself to those before

him “All the forces at my disposal are down in the Konkan, and I have scarcely in the Dekkan enough men to man the walls of my fortresses. My followers are few, and I have no money to provide them with arms and food, and to enlist more of them under my banner. Oh that Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, would smile on me. If I had only a few lakhs of rupees at my disposal, Maharashtra would soon be free and happy from the Kala to the Krishna.

“But why should I debate what I am to do? Bhavani tells me to go to Torna, and to Torna I must go, for in all things aforesaid and in the future, great goddess, I am guided by thy hand.

“But first I must extirpate this nest of hornets that have ventured to establish themselves almost in sight of my fort of Lohogad, and have now laid violent hands on my faithful friend Dattaji and his daughter.”

Then, addressing himself more especially to Nettaji, he said

“The robbers who have seized our friends are the band of Venkat Wagh, who has lately made himself a stronghold in the old Buddhist caves at Bhaja, and thence sallies out to

attack wayfarers going to and from Poona. He has a large following of desperate men, who, if I had only the money to arm and pay them, would gladly fight under my banner for Maharashtra. We must now go to Lohogad to make ready for the enterprise."

Here the old gosain interposed, saying that he would proceed to the neighbourhood of the caves to keep an eye on the movements of the robbers, and, after learning all he could about their intentions and means of defence, would wait for Shivaji near the votive clay houses, marking the spot where the Mahometan saint, Shaikh Umar, dismounted on the ridge connecting Lohogad with the neighbouring hill-fort of Visapur.

CHAPTER XIII

CAPTURE OF KASHI

WHEN Dattaji and Kashi left Rajmachi in the dead of night, under the guidance of Rama, they proceeded for some miles along the main track to Khandalla. Then, fearing the risk of meeting the Bijapur troops

advancing against Rajmachi, they turned aside and took refuge for the rest of the night in the empty buildings of one of the many ruined farmsteads that gave silent evidence of the insecurity of life and property during this turbulent period. In the early morning, calculating rightly that the Bijapur army had now passed them, they returned to the main track and made their way to Khandalla. There they sought refuge in the house of the farmer who had taken charge of the captured charger. He received them hospitably, and persuaded them to rest until the following morning in his humble home. Exhausted as they were by their long ride, they gladly availed themselves of his kind offer. Even Rama's iron muscles required rest after the fatigue of his journey to and from Rajmachi.

Next morning, according to the practice of Indian travellers, they started more than an hour before sunrise along the road to Lohogad. They passed without adventure through the forest of Lonauli, leaving on their left the present site of the station of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, where the heavy locomotives employed to climb up the Bhor Ghaut are changed for the lighter engines that run

along the level route to Poona, and on to Haidarabad and Madras

They had just come in sight of Lohogad, when they were ordered to halt by a stern voice proceeding from a rock on the left of their course. They looked up, and saw standing there a tall strong man, armed with spear and sword. Almost at the same time they were surrounded by a body of ragamuffins in dirty clothes, and armed, some with swords, some with spears, some with bows and arrows, and others with nothing more formidable than strong sticks.

Resistance and flight were equally hopeless. So Dattaji determined to try the effect of gentle words. He addressed the leader of their assailants, who had now descended from his position on the rock and strode up to the travellers.

"Spare us, and allow us to go on our way in peace," he said, "for the sake of the great gods, or, if ye fear not the gods, for the sake of Shivaji, who will avenge any wrong done to his friends."

"I care neither for the gods," he replied, "nor for Shivaji, who boasts himself to be a god incarnate, though I could break his back across my knee, and have, in scorn of his pre-

tensions, planted my stronghold opposite the fort he has stolen. My god is my spear which supplies me and my followers with meat and drink and clothing."

Rama, who was not destitute of humour, was inclined to reply that, looking to the appearance of his rabble following, his god was not a very good provider, but he contented himself with making this remark to himself, for it is well to be polite to those who have you at their mercy. Nor was his inclination to joke increased when two of the robbers came up and tied his hands fast behind his back. As Dattaji was old, and Kashi was a woman, it was not considered necessary to bind them. The heads of their ponies were seized and turned off the road into a track leading through the jungle to the robbers' stronghold. The robber chief walked beside Dattaji, and asked him who he was and where he was going. On receiving the desired information he replied

"You are a rich man, and could pay a fine ransom. But I will not be hard on you. Give me your fair daughter as my wife, and I will let you go free."

Dattaji could not repress his indignation at such a proposal, and angrily answered that he

would rather see his daughter dead than the wife of a landless robber

"Be not so foolishly proud, old man, whom I intend to make my honoured father-in-law," replied the robber "If I am a robber to-day, I may be a king to-morrow In such stirring times as these a mustard-seed becomes a mountain, and a beggar may become a king They say that Shivaji, who was but now a leader of freebooters, is destined to be as great a king as Vikramaditya, and why should not I aspire to the same greatness?"

"And do you," replied Dattaji, "dare to compare yourself to the son of Shahji, the descendant of the Rajput kings of Udepur, the favourite of the high gods?"

"I am a taller and stronger man than he As for his Rajput descent, everyone knows that it was invented for him by his friends, and the favour of the gods, if there are any such beings, is given to those that help themselves Besides," he added with a sardonic grin, "I am only asking what I can take, for, with or without your consent, the fair Kashi shall be my bride"

He then went to the side of Kashi's pony, and said to her

“Fair Kashi, the fame of thy beauty has been bruited abroad all over Maharahshtra It has been my good fortune to capture thee, and I am carrying thee off to be my bride, as warriors used to do in the good old times, and may sometimes do even at the present day Thou wilt pardon the outrage for which thy beauty is responsible, and be the loving wife of a bold warrior who fears neither God nor man ”

In the terrible strait to which she had been reduced, Kashi did not lose her presence of mind She saw that, in her position, it would be folly to utter the words of abhorrence and defiance that naturally rose to her lips Time might be gained by a soft answer, and by a certain amount of the deceit which, in all ages and countries, has been the chief defence of weak woman against the violence of strong men So she replied

“ Since my childhood I have vowed to marry no one who does not devote his life to the cause of Maharashtra Join Shivaji in his effort to free these hills and valleys from the yoke of Bijapur, and my father may think of giving you his daughter in marriage, if such a gift would be any reward for your warlike labours ”

“ And think'st thou that I, Venkat Wagh will

fight under the banner of Shivaji, who is merely a robber like myself, and not my equal in stature, strength, or courage Perish the thought But with thee for my bride I myself will be the leader in the cause of freedom, and the robber chieftain of Bhaja will be transformed by the magic power of love into a patriot king ”

He then returned to Dattaji and told him of the encouragement that, as he thought, Kashi had given him, and expressed his determination to reform his life and raise the standard of freedom, so as to make himself worthy of such a bride as Kashi

Dattaji, knowing well his daughter's cleverness, understood why she had spoken smooth words in answer to the audacious proposal of the robber, and said

“I am glad to hear that you intend to amend your life, as I could never consent to my daughter's marrying a robber As the first proof of your good intentions, you must let us go free, whom you have unjustly captured ”

The robber laughed at this proposal

“No, no,” he said “If I let you go, you would soon be with Shivaji in Lohogad Do you think I am going to throw away my trump

card and let him pick it up? No, you must come with me as my guest to Bhaja, and there we shall prepare for the happy bridal ”

In the meantime Rama whispered to Gopal, one of the robbers who walked beside him

“ Help me to escape, and the rich Dattaji will give you a far larger reward than the small share of his ransom that you can expect to get out of your chief’s liberality ”

“ Yes,” whispered Gopal in reply, “ but if I let you escape, I shall be hanged on the nearest tree, and feed the vultures before my time ”

“ All I ask you is, that when we are passing through that wood, you will loosen a little the cloth wound round my left arm, by which you now hold me a prisoner ”

The robber silently nodded assent to this proposal. He was an old friend of Rama’s, and like most men was not unwilling to do a good turn to a friend, when he might thereby at the same time advantage himself. He knew that Dattaji was rich and liberal, and would well reward anyone who helped him and his daughter to regain their freedom

So when they were passing the wood he loosened his hold on the piece of cloth, and

Rama shook himself free and ran for his life. As he ran, he managed to disengage his hands also from the cords that bound them. Some arrows were shot after him, but it was not easy to hit him as he darted quickly through a narrow path, in which he was half-concealed by the trunks of the trees and undergrowth. The robbers who ran after him could not catch him, and soon gave up the chase. When he was well out of sight he found a place of concealment in a thick clump of shrubs. There he remained in case some of the robbers might be watching for him at the edge of the wood, and he did not venture to leave his shelter in the wood until from his hiding-place he caught sight of Nettaji riding along the road.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAVES OF BHAJA

IN the meantime Dattaji and Kashi, escorted by the band of robbers, had climbed the side of a hill which rose to a height of some four hundred feet. They saw before them several old Buddhist caves facing westward,

nine or ten of which they passed as they moved on from north to south. They then came to a much larger cave, which had in the beginning of the Christian era been the chapel of the Buddhist monks, but was now the abode of robbers. Where the mild priests had chanted their hymns, fierce outlaws now divided the spoils they had torn from the hands, ears, or noses of those who were unfortunate enough to fall into their power. The cave was sixty feet long and thirty feet wide, and divided by two rows of pillars into a nave and side aisles, like those of a Christian church. Corresponding to the Christian altar there was to be seen at the end of the two rows of pillars a dome six feet high, surmounted by a broken box, which once held the relics of some Buddhist saint, perhaps even fragments of the begging-bowl of the holy Buddha himself, or the parings of his nails.

The sun was now rising high in heaven, and it was refreshing to be sheltered under the mass of rock of which the roof of the cave was composed. The robber chieftain seated himself on a cushion before the relic shrine, and an attendant ungirt his sword, which was placed with his buckler in front of him. Another attendant provided him with his hubble-bubble and a cup

of hot milk sweetened with sugar. Cups of the same beverage were also offered to Kashi and her father, who were accommodated with cushions on his right. After offering his guests or captives this hospitality, he told them with as much courtesy as his rough nature would admit of, that they would be provided with a private apartment in a neighbouring cave. To this other cave they were presently conducted with all due honour by one of the robbers, who was privately instructed to see that they had no opportunity afforded them of escaping, in case they should feel disposed to do so. Afterwards they were furnished with milk, chapatties, and such other provisions as the robbers' larder contained.

At the same time the robbers began to feast in the great cave. They were a mixture of various castes and creeds. Some of them, though in rebellion against the laws of God and man, were strict observers of the regulations of caste, and looked with abhorrence on a small knot of their associates, who were Mahometans, and sat apart making an unholy feast on what was to Hindus forbidden food. Most of the Hindus in the band, however, had bid a long farewell to the tyranny of caste,

and ate and drank without scruple whatever pleasant food they could lay their hands on To this category belonged their leader, who, though he boasted that he had once been a Brahmin, ate mutton, and washed it down with draughts of wine that had been brought from Europe to Bombay in the ships of the Portuguese traders

About ten o'clock a visitor came to the robbers at Bhaja, in the shape of an old man, who spread his mat in the shade of a mango-tree in front of the great cave He was well known to most of the band as the gosain Moroba, in whom the god Ganpati had taken up his residence Several of them came up to him to offer him obeisance and give him food and drink, among them Rama's friend who had connived at his escape

At first Moroba refused to take the least notice of their obeisance and their offerings, and remained absolutely silent, looking straight before him, as if absorbed in deep meditation Then he exclaimed in anger

"Why come ye to me, the favoured of Ganpati? Is not your leader a despiser of the gods? Did he not melt down the image of Ganpati that he sacrilegiously stole from

the temple of Morgaon? Men who do such deeds live not long, and those who aid them and serve them will not escape destruction when the hour of vengeance comes”

A shudder of alarm passed over the countenances of his hearers. Then Rama's friend, Gopal, said “Tell us, holy man, what we are to do? Are we to be unfaithful to our salt?”

Just at this moment the voice of their leader was heard calling to them from the mouth of the cave

“Who is that beggar you are talking to? I will have no gosains prying about my stronghold. Tell him to pack off at once if he wants to get away with a whole skin”

“Hear what that impious man says,” whispered Moroba to those around him, “and how he threatens with violence the poor devotee of the god. Here I will stay, that he may even scourge me and fill to the brim the cup of his iniquity.”

They besought him to go in peace, telling him that their leader was a fierce man, and that he might do any deed of violence when fired by the strong drink of the Feringhis. But Moroba would not budge.

“Let him do his worst,” he said “Ganpati will protect his servant now as he has done before Let us see who is stronger, the man or the god”

The robber chief now came up and told Gopal to beat Moroba with his stick if he would not move Gopal bowed down to the ground before his leader and humbly said

“Master, you may kill me, but I cannot strike the favoured servant of Ganpati”

His leader seemed inclined to take him at his word He drew his scimitar and slashed at Gopal, slightly wounding him on the shoulder In the meantime all the band had assembled Most of them were Hindus, and, although used to deeds of violence, could not bear to see a gosain ill-treated A murmur of indignation was heard, which their leader could not venture to disregard So he returned sullenly to the cave, leaving the ascetic in undisturbed possession of his place of observation under the mango-tree, where he conversed freely with such of the robbers as ventured to come to him

The shrewd ascetic did not neglect his opportunities, but exerted all his powers of persuasion to win over those who approached

him by skilful appeals to higher or lower motives, according to the character of the men he addressed. Those who seemed capable of better things he reminded of their duty to their country and to their religion, which alike required them to leave their impious leader and join Shivaji. To others of baser nature he pointed out that, if they shook off the yoke of their tyrannical chief, they would be rewarded by the rich Dattaji out of gratitude for his deliverance from captivity, and that Shivaji would divide among them the rich spoils that their leader now unfairly kept in his own hands. Above all, he urged upon them the certainty of their overthrow if they persisted in opposing the gods and Shivaji. These worldly and spiritual arguments had great weight with all to whom they were addressed, and Moroba was such a shrewd judge of the character of his hearers that he did not try to seduce any who were likely to betray him to their leader. Some were more and some were less convinced by his appeals, but all kept to themselves what they had heard. Perhaps Moroba would have had more difficulty in carrying out his plans if it had not been for

the fact that the robber chieftain had resumed his potations of Feringhi wine so vigorously that ere long he was stretched out on his cushions overcome by a drunken sleep

CHAPTER XV

THE ROBBER CHIEF

IN this drunken sleep he continued through the heat of the day When the sun was well past the meridian, and was beginning to shine into the mouths of the Bhaja caves, he was roused by a messenger, who informed him that a considerable body of armed men was advancing from Lohogad

The robber captain's face was flushed, and his head was heavy with the wine he had drunk He started from the pillows on which he had been lolling, and ordered one of his attendants to pour a jar of water over his head and neck Thus refreshed, and with his brains partially cleared from the fumes of the wine, he prepared for action The entrance of the cave had been barricaded with the stems of trees and a breastwork of stones,

so that it would be a difficult passage to force. On the other hand, as there was no outlet at the back or side of the cave, the defenders, if overpowered, had no chance of running away. If they could not repulse their assailants, they would either be killed or captured. This was no matter for regret to their chief, who had good reason to doubt the devotion of his followers. He knew that many of them would desert or betray him for the sake of saving their lives, or for any other advantage, and was therefore glad that they were in a position in which they would have little opportunity of doing so. With these thoughts in his mind he told them to arm themselves and strengthen the defences in order to repulse the attack with which they appeared to be threatened.

Then he remembered his captives, and had them brought to the main cave. He provided them with seats in the mouth of the cave immediately behind the rampart of wood and stones, and said to Kashi

“ Sit here, my beloved, and see with thine own eyes with what valour thy warrior will defend his stronghold against all who venture to attack it ”

“Surely, brave warrior as you are” replied Kashi, who as usual had her wits about her, “you would not expose the lady you love and her father to the chance of being killed by arrow or shot. If you place us in yonder corner, we can see the battle as well, and shall be less exposed to the missiles of the enemy.”

“Lady of my heart,” he replied, “thou hast spoken well. What would victory avail to Venkat Wagh if a stray shot laid low his bride?”

So he had them placed in a safer position, and went forward to meet a messenger who had come from the enemy to have a parley with him, and haughtily demanded what he had to say.

The messenger replied that he came from the mighty prince Shivaji, who had heard with indignation that his friend Dattaji and his daughter had been detained by robbers in the caves of Bhaja. He then went on in a loud voice, so that not only the captain but also his followers might hear.

“The Prince Shivaji requires you to give up Dattaji and his daughter safe and sound and leave the caves of Bhaja, in which case

you and your followers may either enlist in the service of our master, or go unmolested wherever you choose to go”

“And if,” said the robber, “we refuse to give up our captives?”

“Then,” replied the messenger, “you will be driven by force out of your stronghold, and those of you who escape death in the attack will be hanged high on the nearest tree, as a warning to all who venture to resist the will of the mighty prince Shivaji”

“Then take my answer to your mighty prince,” replied Venkat Wagh “Tell him that Kashi is my affianced bride, and that her father has consented to our betrothal Tell him that I am a robber like himself, and a stronger one, as he will find to his cost if he ventures within reach of this right arm Tell him also this, that Kashi and her father are seated in the centre of the entrance of the cave immediately behind the rampart, and will remain there during the assault if you dare to assail us Should they fall by a chance missile, on your heads be their blood And now,” he concluded, “I must give you a backshish for your message, and for the loud voice in which you delivered it, so that all

my men might hear the tempting offers of your prince "

With that he smote the messenger on the head contemptuously with his sheathed scimitar and bade him depart. The man leapt on his horse and galloped off, followed by a volley of stones thrown by some of the robbers who stood near and had heard their captain's words

CHAPTER XVI

RELEASE OF KASHI

WHEN Shivaji received from his messenger the reply of the robber chieftain he called to a council of war Nettaji and two of his commanders from the fort of Lohogad, to determine what was to be done. The threat to expose Kashi and her father to the missiles of the assailants made the capture of the cave a difficult undertaking. The assailants could not venture to fire into the mouth of the cave as they advanced to the attack, and they would be exposed unprotected to the volleys that would be poured into their ranks by the

defenders of the cave. However, even at this disadvantage it was determined to make the attack without delay.

The plan arranged by Shivaji and Nettaji, so as to meet the circumstances of the case was as follows. The attacking force was divided into three bands. One band, consisting for the most part of men armed with muskets and bows and arrows, was to make a feint of attacking the cave from the front. The two other bands, composed of men armed for close combat, were to make long circuits on the right and left, carefully concealing their movements from the defenders of the cave. They were to work their way along to the track that led past the caves, and, when they reached it, advance without noise from the north and the south respectively, until they were close to the point of attack on either side of the cave. Then, when Shivaji, who was to be with the main central division, gave the signal by waving a flag, the attack was to be made simultaneously from the two sides and from the front. By this clever arrangement the robbers would derive little advantage from their leader's nefarious threat to expose Kashi and her

father to the missiles of the friends who were coming to release them

For about half an hour after the return of the messenger, Shivaji ordered his men to make movements as if they were about to charge up to the cave. This kept the attention of the robbers occupied so that they did not apprehend any other attack. At last the two bodies of men advancing from the north and south had stolen unnoticed up to the sides of the entrance.

Then the flag was waved, and Shivaji led his men to the attack. They clambered up the side of the hill with the agility of monkeys, and at the same time the two other bands rushed at the right and left of the barricade. Nettaji, who commanded the band on the right, brandished a heavy axe, with which he hewed an opening through the beams of wood on the top of the breastwork. The defenders gave way before his resolute attack, and he leapt over the stone barrier, crying out in a loud voice that those who wished to escape the vengeance of Shivaji should retire to the interior of the cave, and attacking with his axe those who ventured to stand in his path. Gopal and several others of the more



"HE LEAPT OVER THE STONE BARRIER"

religious or more timid of the robbers, shouting out that all was lost, took his advice and ran away to take refuge in the dark recess behind the relic shrine. Kashi at the same time jumped up, and, taking her father's hand, led him to the same retreat.

In the meantime the robber captain had been giving proof that, though he was a boaster, he was no coward. He defended the entrance to the cavern on the right, where he had taken his position so as to be near Kashi and have an opportunity of showing her his prowess. Two of the boldest of the assailants had fallen beneath his scimitar, when he heard shouts behind him, and, turning round, saw that one of the enemy had got over the barrier and forced his way into the cave. He immediately rushed with uplifted scimitar against his new antagonist.

Nettaji's position was perilous in the extreme. His followers had not yet got over the barricade, and he stood alone and unsupported. The robber chieftain faced him, and around him stood others of the outlaw band, who were kept at a distance by the great axe with which he had hewn his way in, and which he swung round his head

Venkat Wagh aimed a blow at his head with his scimitar. Nettare parried it with his axe, but such was the force of the blow that it cut through the wooden handle, and the iron axe-head fell with a clang on the stone floor.

Nettare was so hard pressed that he had not time to draw his sword, and had to defend himself as best he could with the headless staff of his axe against the ring of enemies by whom he was surrounded. Almost in a moment he had received several wounds on his legs and arms. The robber chieftain's scimitar had fortunately been broken by the violent contact with Nettare's axe. He had, however, now drawn another sword that was girt to his side, and once more rushed upon his antagonist, who was too much occupied with his other assailants to be in a position to meet his onslaught. But in their efforts to overthrow Nettare the robbers had withdrawn from the barricade, over which the main body of the attacking force now leapt unopposed, led by Shivaji in person. Just as the robber chieftain's sword was raised to deliver another furious blow at Nettare's devoted head, the long sword of Shivaji was thrust through his right side into his heart,

and he fell lifeless on the floor of the cave. When their leader was slain the other robbers made no more resistance, but grovelled on the ground praying for mercy.

Thus was the robber stronghold in the cave of Bhaja captured. Most of the band readily transferred their allegiance to Shivaji. A considerable amount of gold and silver was found in the strong-box, in which the robber chief had shut up for himself the lion's share of their plunder. As the gold appeared to be the result of the sacrilegious seizure of the image of Ganpati at Morgaon, it was all handed over to old Moroba, that he might have it cast anew in the form of the elephant-headed god. Most of the silver Shivaji employed to clear off the arrears of pay due to his followers. Some of it he distributed among his new adherents, the remnant of the robber's band, giving most to Gopal and the others who at Moroba's instigation had deserted their leader. At the same time he warned them to be more faithful to him than they had been to Venkat Wagh.

CHAPTER XVII

AT LOHOGAD

IT may be easily imagined how joyful Dattaji and Kashi were to escape from captivity, and from the dangers to which they had been exposed by the robber chieftain's designs upon Kashi, and how grateful they were to their deliverers. After the fight they were escorted with due honour up to the fortress of Lohogad, Dattaji on a pony and Kashi in a gay palanquin, overshadowed by mango boughs to protect her from the heat of the sun. Their course was up to the ridge between Lohogad and Visapur, where, by the clay votive horses of Shaikh Umar, Moroba had waited for the force led down from Lohogad by Shivaji, and had given valuable information of all he had learnt of the robbers' strength and of the disposition of their forces. Thence they turned westwards, and soon reached the Hanumant Gateway, through which, and three later gates built in the days of Nana Fadnavis, one still enters the famous old fortress.

Here Shivaji assigned suitable apartments

to Kashi and her father. In the evening he had a long and earnest conversation on the state of affairs with Nettaji. He still harped on his distress for want of money, which was so overpowering that he was strongly tempted to give up his great plans for the liberation of his country and become a jogi¹.

"There are," he said, "forty thousand Mawulis who would gladly draw the sword in my cause, and in their country's cause, if I could only provide their strong and willing arms with swords to wield. Even now they would rise at my call. But what would sickles, bills, and clubs avail against the muskets and mail-clad warriors of Bijapur and Delhi. It is true that by the favour of heaven I have gained possession of the mountain fortresses that dominate the Dekkan and Konkan, but their ramparts are falling to ruin, and how am I to pay workmen to repair them, in spite of the help in money that my dear friend Dattaji and other lovers of their country have freely given? Well, the behest of Bhavani has never led me astray yet. I must go with my new companion-in-arms,

¹ Jogī = one who retires from the world to live a life of austerity and religious contemplation. Hindi form of Yogi.

Nettaji, to Torna, where they are trying to strengthen the walls a little. Perhaps there some good may befall me. If not, you may soon expect to hear the news that Shivaji has become a jogi, and left the work of liberating his country to some better or more fortunate leader, perhaps to Nettaji."

"Nay," replied Nettaji, "it is thine to lead, and mine ever to follow thee, to the death if need be."

And then Nettaji told him of the prophetic visions related to him by the hermit of Matheran.

"And what reward can I offer to him who is to be as my right hand in the great struggle?"

"No reward I crave but thy regard, and the consciousness of doing my duty," replied Nettaji. "Yet stay," he added, "there is one reward I seek, a reward that is closely connected with my longing to serve my country. Even in the days of our childhood, Kashi, the daughter of Dattaji, encouraged me by the banks of the Dhauri in my dreams of the liberation of Maharashtra. United with her, if the gods allow me such an honour, my strength would be redoubled.

But if I may not look so high, and this great boon cannot be granted me, think not but that I will serve thee and my country loyally. My preceptor the hermit taught me better things than to regard the performance of my duty to the gods and my country as means for the attainment of temporal happiness."

Shivaji readily promised to use his influence with Dattaji to promote Nettaji's marriage to Kashi. The old man at first made objections on account of the inequality of the fortunes of the two families, for he was very rich, and Nettaji's family, although honourable and respected, was poor. But at last, moved partly by gratitude for Nettaji's exertions in their behalf, partly by a desire to gratify Shivaji, and still more by regard for the happiness of his only daughter, who had evidently loved Nettaji from the days of her childhood, and loved him still more as the liberator of herself and father from hateful captivity, he consented. Who then in the whole of Maharashtra were as happy as Nettaji and Kashi, now that they were betrothed to be man and wife? Once more they met and talked of the memories of the past and their hopes of the future. Nettaji told her of the

mental agony he had suffered when he heard of her capture

"Yes," she replied, "but I had a presentiment that you would somehow come to my relief. Ah, how terrible you looked when you broke through the barricade, axe in hand, dealing death among your enemies! How I trembled for you when that robber rushed at you with his scimitar! I could hardly refrain from rushing from my place of concealment and throwing myself in his way. But what can a poor woman do in such a scene of violence? And I knew that you would be victorious, that the gods would not allow that impious blasphemer to slay their faithful servant"

Thus they conversed on the wind-swept top of Lohogad, as they walked at the witching hour of sunset round its battlements, and looked down on the table-land of the Dekkan and the many mountains that rise from its surface. On the north they saw the Indrayani flowing to Khadkala, the eastern view was blocked by the mountain of Visapur, with its embattled summit, on the south rose the tapering cone of the fort of Tongi, and a little farther away the sister peak of Tikona. On the west the sun was setting over the

high mountains on the edge of the Ghauts, which enviously denied them the sight of Chauk and Matheran, the home of their childhood. But their souls together overpassed the great mountain barrier, and dwelt lovingly on the well-remembered features of mountain and valley. Then as they thought of the days of their childhood a strain of sadness mingled with their joy, for they remembered their loved and lost playmate, the gentle Gunga, and mourned over the sad fate that had torn her from them. They wondered if she were still living, and thought how sweet would have been her tender sympathy in their hour of gladness.

CHAPTER XVIII

VISION OF BHAVANI

NETTAJI was not allowed long to enjoy peace and happiness in the company of his betrothed. Early on the following morning he had, in accordance with the injunction of the goddess Bhavani, to start with Shivaji for the fort of Torna. No effort was to be

made for the present to recover Rajmachi and relieve Trimbak Rao's small garrison besieged in Shrivardhan Shivaji had weakened all the Dekkan garrisons so as to send down to the Konkan a strong enough force to operate against Kalyan, and attack the convoys of treasure expected to proceed from Kalyan to Bijapur He therefore had on the Dekkan no means of raising a force strong enough to encounter the Bijapur army at Rajmachi

Long before dawn the two friends issued by torchlight from the gate of Lohogad Nettaji rode Abu Jan, the noble Arab he had taken from Ayub Khan, and Shivaji his Dekkan charger, which in the rough parts of their course showed itself to be wonderfully sure-footed and scarcely required any guidance from its rider. Their first halt, after a ride of ten miles, was at the fort of Goarigad, another of Shivaji's newly-acquired mountain strongholds, which commanded the Ambavni Pass, about twenty miles to the south of the Bhore Ghaut, commanded by Rajmachi After a short stay there, during which the prince inspected the defences and made an offering to Goaridevi, the presiding goddess, they proceeded on their journey, and ere mid-day reached

the village of Mulshi, where they rested themselves and their horses for two or three hours during the heat of the day. They had now traversed more than half the distance to Torna. They had still, however, before them a ride of twenty miles more. So, early in the afternoon they mounted their horses again, riding swiftly and warily over rough and smooth till they saw the bastions of Torna towering high above their heads¹. The ascent to the gate was so precipitous that they had to get off their horses at one point and climb up by an almost perpendicular staircase, that reminded Nettaji of Jacob's Ladder at Matheran. At last, after a severe climb, they turned a corner, and came suddenly on the gate, imbedded in a cleft of the rock. They were greeted with loud cries of "Jey, Jey, Shivaji Maharaj!"² and taken to the most habitable building on the mountain-top.

As Shivaji and Nettaji, after refreshing exhausted nature, sat on the veranda of the house that they occupied for the night, two men came to request an audience.

¹ For a description of Torna, see Douglas's *Bombay and Western India* (Sampson, Low, & Co.)

² "Hurrah for the great King Shivaji!"

The first was the master of the workmen engaged on the task of repairing the fortifications. After the customary words of respectful salutation, he said

“Mighty prince, my workmen have been labouring hard for many days without payment, and complain that they have not food enough to keep body and soul together, far less to bear the exertion of hewing the solid rock and placing stone upon stone so as to make this fortress impregnable. I fear that without pay they will work no longer. They will slip away, and leave the ruined battlements as they are. For myself, mighty prince, I would work for you until I dropped dead with exhaustion, and that without reward or hope of reward. But what can you expect of poor men working for their daily bread, and to supply grain for their wives and children? Every morning I expect to find them all fled from Torna, to seek better-paid work elsewhere.”

Shivaji turned to his friend and whispered “See how the carrying out of the greatest and most far-reaching plans may depend on such material means as silver and gold.”

Then he said aloud to the master workman

“Good friend, my treasure-chest is empty, and I know not what to do, except to pray to the goddess Bhavani, to see if, perchance, she may help me ”

“Great prince,” replied the mason, “to whom we look for the restoration of Maharashtra, give my workmen but a few thousand rupees, and we will rebuild the walls of Torna so that they may defy the arms of Bijapur and the Great Mogul Nay, we will do more We will fortify also the neighbouring mountain of Morbudh, and build on it store-houses and palaces, so that it may be worthy to be the capital of the great king you are destined to be ”

With these words he made a humble obeisance and departed, and the next petitioner for an audience was admitted to the presence of the prince His appearance was very strange in the eyes of Nettare, who had never in his life before seen such a man His face was so white that he might have been supposed to be suffering from some kind of leprosy He wore trousers, but of a different style from those worn by Mahometans, and his black coat was of a strange shape Strangest of all, he entered the prince’s presence booted and bare-headed,

which is regarded as very disrespectful conduct in India. In his hand he carried head-gear which was neither a turban nor a helmet, so that Nettare could for a moment make nothing of it. At last the meaning of it all flashed upon him. The man before him was a Feringhi from Bombay, one of those who had come thousands of miles over the sea to make themselves rich by selling the manufactures of Europe, and by taking back in exchange the products of Asia.

He was, in fact, a Portuguese merchant, and, as he did not know much Marathi or Hindustani, it was necessary for him to make known his wishes by means of an interpreter.

"I am," he informed Shivaji through this medium, "a partner in a firm of Portuguese merchants. Our ships have brought to Bombay, together with other European manufactures, a valuable consignment of good arms, namely, ten thousand swords of tempered steel from Toledo, five thousand iron shields, a thousand muskets, twelve brass cannon, and a large quantity of ammunition. All this we have stored at our outlying fort of Thana, with

the intention of selling it to the Emperor of the Moguls or to the King of Bijapur With this object I have visited the Bijapur governor of Kalyan and the Mogul commander at Junnai, but have not yet finally concluded a bargain In my journeying from place to place much has been told me of your fame and prowess All the Hindus I have conversed with, high and low, rich and poor, warrior and cultivator, Brahmin and Prabhu, speak of your great destiny 'Wait', they say, 'till Shivaji rises in his strength, and you will see the armies of the Mogul and of Bijapur driven out of Western India like dry leaves before the monsoon blast' But I have also seen that your followers are poorly armed, and what can the bravest soldiers do without good weapons? So from Poona I have come here in the hope of meeting you, and by good fortune we have met You cannot achieve the great destiny that is prophesied for you without using the means, and the means of achieving it lie stored in the fort of Thana Will you anticipate your rivals and enemies, and purchase the munitions of war that lie there ready to your hand?"

Shivaji was evidently much excited by the merchant's words. However, he controlled his emotion, and in a business-like tone asked what price was asked for the weapons stored at Thana. The merchant replied that the purchase-money would be a lakh and a half of rupees. Shivaji replied that he would consider the matter, and give his answer on the morrow.

As soon as the merchant had gone, Shivaji strode up and down the room in great mental agitation.

"Now," he said to Nettaji, "it is clear to me that my protecting goddess wills that the warlike stores of this Feringhi merchant should be mine. They *must* be mine. But how? I cannot, out of my empty treasury, get money to purchase them. Shall I therefore fail to seize the means of victory that lie almost within my grasp? If not by purchase, then by force or fraud I must get these arms. A thousand of my brave Mawulis must scale the walls of Thana fort in the night, and thou, Nettaji, must lead them. Surely it was with that end that the goddess made me come to Torna in thy company. Win these arms

for me, my trusty friend, and when my bold Marathas are armed to meet the Mahometans in the field, thou and I will lead them to victory and conquest. The plan seems a desperate one, but desperate diseases need desperate remedies. Unless I can immediately get arms and money, Shrivardhan will be taken and my forts will all fall, one after another, like ripe fruit, into the hand of the enemy, and the fair land of Maharashtra will be trampled under the feet of the oppressor, and the temples of her gods will be defiled."

As he spoke these words his patriotic and religious feelings overcame him, and he wept bitter tears at the gloomy prospect he had conjured up in his imagination. And then he left Nettaji on the veranda, and went to pray in the temple of Bhavani.

While Shivaji prayed in the temple, Nettaji remained in the veranda pondering on the well-remembered past and the unknown future. After his long ride he was tired and drowsy, and at intervals sleep overcame him. Waking thoughts and dreams, confusedly intermingled, followed each other in quick succession. He

was dimly conscious that the moon rose and poured a flood of silver light over the scene, making the white walls of the half-ruined buildings around him gleam like polished marble. His eyes were fixed on a small shrine, out of a hole in which a cobra crept and raised its hood. But was it a cobra? As he looked at it, he saw the hood transformed into a beckoning hand, and the body of the snake became an arm resplendent with countless gems, which flashed in the moonlight. Presently there was revealed to him the whole form of the goddess Bhavani, her head adorned with the mild radiance of pearls, her breast with white cowrie-shells, and her forehead marked with a red spot. She looked at Nettaji steadfastly with great unwinking eyes, as if she saw into the depth of his soul, and then she spoke.

"The goddess Bhavani sees that thou, though a mortal man, art worthy to be associated with the great Shivaji in the glorious task of liberating Maharashtra. Thy captain is now praying in my temple for my aid in his time of need, which I will not refuse to vouchsafe to him. To-morrow begin the day

by sacrifice to me, and then dig deep under this shrine, and ye shall find what ye shall find ”

Then the goddess disappeared, and Nettareji arose and rubbed his eyes, and wondered whether what he had seen was a dream, or a waking vision, or an illusion. At any rate there still remained before his eyes the shrine, and he could even see the hole out of which the serpent had crept.

And now Shivaji, having finished his devotions, returned and said

“ During my prayers the goddess comforted me with hope, but made no clear revelation, except that somehow thou, Nettareji, wouldst relieve me in my distress. She surely means that thou shouldst attack the Portuguese fort at Thana, and seize those arms for my brave Mawulis. If thou wilt undertake the enterprise, I will put five hundred of my trustiest and bravest followers under thy command. What sayest thou?”

“ I say that I will now and ever follow thy orders as if they were the commands of a god. But first hear what I saw, or seemed to see, when thou wert praying in the temple ”

He then told the story of the appearance of Bhavani. Shivaji listened to his words with eager attention, and when he had heard all, exclaimed

“Would that it were morning. My impatience will make every minute an hour, until the first light of dawn allows us to offer our sacrifice to the goddess, and, following her directions, see what favour she will now bestow on us. And now, good-night, and sleep, if sleep thou canst. For me at any rate sleep is impossible.”

CHAPTER XIX

TREASURE-TROVE

VERY early in the morning a buffalo and a goat were sacrificed to Bhavani. Immediately the sacrifice was over, Shivaji ordered a body of the labourers working at the repairs of the fort to accompany him to the shrine pointed out by Nettare. As they stood looking at it, a magnificent cobra came out of the hole in the shrine and glided quietly away without showing any sign of

anger at being disturbed. This was considered a good omen.

"May not this snake," whispered Shivaji to his friend, "be the goddess Bhavani?"

Then the workmen began to dig at the place indicated, and for a long time they dug without any result. They made a hole several feet deep, but nothing was found but earth. At last the spade of one of the workmen struck a hard substance, and their leader said it would be useless to attempt to dig farther. They had got, he said, through the covering of earth to the solid rock, and no farther progress could be made unless they blasted it with gunpowder.

Just at this moment one of the workmen at the bottom of the hole called out that he could see not only stone but iron, and he struck with his spade something that returned a distinctly metallic clink. When the earth was cleared from it, this turned out to be a strong iron ring firmly attached to the stone. The bottom of the hole was presently widened, and it was seen that the stone was not a part of the solid rock, but a heavy slab of marble, which was evidently intended to

be pulled up by means of the iron ring. So a strong chain was attached to the ring, and the hands of twenty strong workmen from above tugged at it. The slab slowly rose, and disclosed a small chamber, on the stone sides of which the slab had rested. In this chamber were seen about a dozen earthen vessels. When the workmen proceeded to lift them, their weight showed that they were not empty. There was also taken out of the chamber a silver casket, on the lid and sides of which were inscribed such patterns of elaborate tracery as adorn Mahometan architecture in India and Spain.

Shivaji ordered the earthen vessels and the silver box to be taken unopened to his private chamber, where he and Nettaji proceeded to examine them. The earthen vessels were eleven in number, and were all filled to the brim with coins stamped with the names of the old Mahometan kings who had reigned at Delhi before Babar invaded India and founded the dynasty of the Great Moguls. Six of the vessels contained silver rupees, and the remaining five contained gold mohurs. The silver box was full of priceless jewels,

a diamond aigrette, a string of large and beautiful pearls, and many unset stones, some cut and some uncut

Shivaji and Nettareji looked upon all this treasure, not with the greedy eye of avarice, but with nobler feelings, and the former exclaimed

“Thinkest thou that these vessels contain merely gold and silver and precious stones What they hold is something far more precious—arms for my brave Mawlis, ramparts for my hill-forts, nay, the treasure they hold is nothing less, my friend, than the freedom of Maharashtra!”

He then called to his presence a jeweller who resided in the fortress, and was skilled in determining the value of precious stones This man looked with wonder at the number of gold and silver coins, but when he was shown the casket of jewels, he was for the moment struck dumb with amazement At last he recovered the power of speech and exclaimed

“This aigrette must have been made to grace the turban of the Sultan of Delhi, and this pearl necklace he surely intended for the most favoured of his wives”

Shivaji then requested him to give his estimate of the value of the treasure in more definite terms. This he proceeded to do in the most business-like fashion, jotting down the various items and their values on a piece of parchment. The necklace of pearls and the diamond aigrette he valued at considerably more than a lakh of rupees each, and the whole treasure, including the coins, could not be worth less than ten lakhs.

Having obtained this estimate of the value of his find, Shivaji dismissed the jeweller and summoned the Portuguese merchant to his presence. M. De Souza seemed also to be an expert in gems by the keen interest which he took in the aigrette, the necklace, and the other contents of the silver casket. Shivaji told him that he was disposed to purchase his consignment of arms, if on inspection they were of as good a quality as they were represented to be. He only wished to know whether the merchant preferred to be paid for them in coins or in gems. De Souza replied that he was willing to take the diamond aigrette in part payment as the equivalent of half a lakh of rupees. When, how-

ever, he found that Shivaji knew well the value of the ornament, he eventually, after standing out for a long time, agreed to accept it instead of a whole lakh. The remainder of the payment he was willing to take in uncut diamonds and rubies, and, if Shivaji required more weapons, his company had another ship-load coming in two or three months, which he would be willing to barter for the pearl necklace

CHAPTER XX

TORNA TO THANA

THIS having been arranged, Shivaji determined with his usual promptitude to start for the Konkan immediately. His plan was to raise the Mawulis, who were burning with ardour to fight for him, take them to Thana, where they would be equipped with the newly-purchased arms, and return by Kalyan to the relief of Trimbak Rao and his small garrison shut up in Shrivardhan. Before leaving Torna he summoned the archi-

tect, and gave him money to pay the workmen all the arrears of pay due to them, and also a month's pay in advance. He also commissioned him to fortify even more strongly the neighbouring mountain of Morbudh, which was henceforth to be called Rajgad, the king's fort, for it was now to become his royal seat.

After making these arrangements he and Nettaji descended the mountain with De Souza, and proceeded on their journey as quickly as they could. They were compelled, however, somewhat to moderate their pace by having as their companion the Portuguese merchant, who was far from being an expert horseman, and was often in fear of his life as they went by narrow paths along the edge of tremendous precipices. Wherever it was possible, De Souza was carried in a litter by the hillmen, who thus without halting gave him an opportunity of resting, so that he might be more fit to ride when riding was the only way in which it was possible to proceed.

The beginning of their journey took them back through Mulshi towards Goarigad by the same route by which they had come. Then

they turned to the left down the Ambavni Pass and traversed some very rough country till they struck the main road from Bombay to Poona at the village of Chauk. Here once more Nettaji had the happiness of spending the night in his father's homestead, and once more half the night was spent in recounting to his parents all that he had seen and done since he left them to go up the Bhore Ghaut to Rajmachi. Shivaji charmed the old people by his winning graciousness, and by the high future he predicted for their son. He also enlisted under his banner many of Nettaji's old playmates, who were eager to take part in the great work of liberation.

Early on the following morning they started from Chauk for Panvel, a ride of twelve miles along the plain, and thence after a short halt they pushed on to the ferry across the Thana Creek, which they reached before mid-day. By this time Shivaji was already escorted by a considerable train of followers. Before leaving Goarigad he had sent out his emissaries with the Maratha summons to war. "Har, Har, Mahadeva, Dongaras lavila diva!" (O Mahadev, the fire has lit the hills!), which

spread from mouth to mouth with the rapidity of wild-fire. This summons, like the Highland fiery cross, was sent all through the Mawuls, as the valleys in the Ghauts were called, to rouse the hardy peasantry, who made the name of Mawuli famous in Indian history by their courage and devotion. As the message flew from valley to valley, each man told his neighbour that Shivaji was going from Chauk by Panwel to Thana on the following day, and that all who wished to do so might join him with or without arms on his way thither, or might await him on the morning of the day after at the ruined fort of Persik, three miles from Thana, at the mouth of the Kalyan river. Such was the eagerness of the Mawulis to serve him that many of them could not wait for daylight, but ran through the darkness of night to Chauk, so that they might join as soon as possible the leader whom they adored. For Shivaji was one of those leaders who inspire such passionate devotion that they have rather to restrain than excite the zeal of their followers.

The Mawulis who had been unable to join at Chauk, or overtake Shivaji on the way

from Chauk to Thana, repaired to Fort Persik Thither also went three hundred Maratha horsemen, called *bargurs*, whom Shivaji had mounted on three hundred good horses captured recently at Fort Supe These also he had summoned to share in the distribution of the European arms and the subsequent campaign against the enemy That they were richer than the Mawuli foot-soldiers might be inferred from their necklaces of silver, and from the rings of gold and silver that they wore, not only on their fingers, but also in their ears They brought with them long spears, and rode gracefully with the balls of their toes resting on their stirrups.

Leaving the larger number of the Mawulis, who had already joined him, on the eastern side of the creek, with orders to repair to the rendezvous at Persik Fort, Shivaji, with Nettaji and an escort of twenty men, was taken by De Souza into the ferry-boat, which conveyed them all across the creek to Thana Nettaji, who had never set foot on the island of Salsette before, admired the tiled houses and the orderly and prosperous appearance of the town, which was then flourishing under Portu-

guese rule Besides the Hindu temples and Mahometan mosques frequented by the native inhabitants, he saw for the first time Christian churches lifting their crosses high to heaven.

They went straight to the captain's fort, called Reis Magos, under the protection of the guns of which De Souza had stored his valuable consignment of European arms

Shivaji carefully examined them, and found that they were as good as they had been represented to be by De Souza Then ensued a long-protracted haggling, such as was inevitable before a large purchase like this could be concluded, Shivaji depreciating, and De Souza exaggerating the value of the arms The controversy, however, could have only one conclusion Shivaji would have been ready to give almost any price He knew that there would be several thousand Mawulis waiting for him in the morning on the other side of the creek, and he never dreamt of sending them back to their native valleys as unarmed as they came, and without giving them a chance of showing what they could do for their country with good swords in their right

hands and strong shields on their left arms. Had De Souza known the great schemes that depended on the purchase of the goods, he would have demanded and received twice as much as he was eventually persuaded to accept. However, he secured for his company the diamond aigrette and some twenty uncut diamonds and rubies, which made a fair price for his merchandise. He also gladly agreed to give Shivaji the refusal of the other consignment of arms which he expected to arrive from Europe in two or three months.

After the bargain was concluded, De Souza and the captain of Fort Reis Magos took Shivaji and Nettare round the town. They visited the Cathedral and St John's Church, and the convents of Jesuits, Augustines, Capuchins, and Dominicans. Then they went to the silk and cotton looms, and inspected the workshops of the furniture dealers, where blackwood desks and tables were cunningly inlaid with ivory. Leaving the town, they saw all round it a richly cultivated country, with many fine country mansions, in which dwelt well-to-do Portuguese land-owners. Everywhere there

were manifest signs of wealth and prosperity and good order, such as the Marathas had never seen in their own distressed country. When, after their tour of inspection, they were taken to the house assigned to them for reception, and were alone, Shivaji said to his friend

“A fine town, full of wealth, and not very strongly defended! I half regret that I did not carry out my first idea, and send you with the Mawulis to take it by surprise. Then we should not only have got the arms for nothing, but also the rich spoils of the town.”

“But,” replied Nettaji, “would not the vengeance of Heaven have fallen upon us if we had attacked wantonly a town, the inhabitants of which had given us no provocation?”

“Such considerations as these,” said Shivaji, “would not have deterred me from attacking the place, if Bhavani, my mistress, had put it in my mind. Nice considerations of morality must not come in the way of our great object. Any means are sanctified which promote the great end of the liberation of Maharashtra and the temples of her gods from the rule of the Mahometan.”

"Such," replied Nettaji, "was not the teaching of my preceptor, the hermit of Matheian. He taught me that the great gods could not be served by transgressions of the everlasting laws of truth and justice, that power based on falsehood and injustice could not last long, and this he said was the reason why the wealth and power of Bijapur and the Mogul Empire would not save them from destruction."

"Well," said Shivaji, "I too have heard such teaching from the mouth of the holy Ramdas and others. But my zeal for Maharashtra and her gods at times burns so fiercely in my soul that it consumes all other feelings, and to attain the great end I would not only offer such a trifling sacrifice as my own life and the lives of those nearest and dearest to me, but also break, if need were, all laws human and divine."

"But how," asked Nettaji, "can the great gods be served by transgressing the laws they have written so plainly in the hearts of all men?"

"I cannot answer thy question," said Shivaji. "But perchance if thou wert urged on as I am by the fierce goad that Bhavani drives into my

soul, thou wouldst think and feel as I do But," he added in a kindly tone, "I honour and will respect thy scruples, and will never ask thee to do for me or Maharashtra any deed that thy dead preceptor would disapprove If ever the stern necessity arises that such deeds have to be done, I will take the burden of them on my own conscience"

With these words they parted for the night and retired to rest

CHAPTER XXI

PURSUIT OF CONVOY

EARLY on the following morning the load of arms was conveyed across the creek to Kalva, whither the nine or ten thousand Mawulis and three hundred bargirs assembled at Fort Persik had been summoned to come at daybreak They were sturdy men of short stature, and the size of their calves showed that they had been engaged all their lives in climbing up and down the paths of steep mountains

They received Shivaji with the wildest expressions of delight, and those who got near enough to do him obeisance knelt down on the ground before him. Nettare, too, came in for a share of their warm reception, for the story of his combat with the mighty negro at Rajmachi had been blazoned far and wide, above and below the Ghauts, by the breath of popular rumour. He was glad to recognize among them his old friend Rama, who asked and obtained leave to be his special attendant or esquire.

When the Mawulis and bargirs received each a strong buckler and a sword of tempered steel, they shouted aloud for joy, and clashed their swords against their shields as a sign of their eagerness for battle. Still greater was the delight of the selected few who were presented with guns, and formed into a regiment of musketeers.

No wonder that, when the sentry on the watch-tower of Reis Magos suddenly saw this large force manifesting their warlike ardour on the other side of the narrow creek, he rushed with pale face to the commandant of the fort, and that the commandant, fearing an imme-

diate attack, called his small garrison to arms

The brass cannon, together with ammunition and cannon-balls, were hoisted on to boats near Fort Persik, at the mouth of the river Ulhas, which flows past Kalyan. A certain number of Mawulis were put in charge of the cannon, and directed to take them up with the tide, and land them a few miles below that large and important town, the capital of the Bijapur dominions in the northern Konkan, which Shivaji evidently intended to attack. It had already been threatened for some months by a Maratha force under the command of an able Brahmin commander named Abaji Sondev, who was, however, not strong enough to attack the town, and had to content himself with intercepting the communications between it and Bijapur. Indeed, the garrison of Kalyan, though less numerous, was so much better armed than the force under the command of Abaji Sondev, that, even if the two opposed forces had met in the open field, the garrison would have been too strong for the body of Marathas which threatened it. So Abaji Sondev pitched his camp by the road

between Kalyan and the Bhor Ghaut at Kulgaon, near the present site of Badlapur station on the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, and thence made plundering excursions in the country round, to punish and intimidate those who refused to join the revolt against the power of Bijapur, and paid their taxes to the Mahometan tax-collectors.

Shivaji's plan was to join hands with Abaji Sondev, and undertake in earnest the siege of Kalyan. So he marched his newly-raised Mawulis along the left bank of the Ulhas from Fort Persik to Bhopar, within six miles of that town, and there pitched his tents. The main body of his army was to wait for the arrival of the boats bringing up the brass cannon. He himself, with Nettare and the three hundred bargirs and five hundred foot, left the main body and made a circuit to the right, with the intention of getting round to Abaji Sondev's camp at Kulgaon unperceived by the garrison of Kalyan.

When they arrived near Bava Malang, a high mountain of fantastic shape known well to English visitors at Matheran as the Cathedral Rock, they came upon some peas-

ants cutting wood, of whom they asked information about the movements of the enemy. The peasants knew little or nothing of what was going on in Kalyan, but only three hours before a large body of Mahometan troops, about five hundred horse, they said, had passed by them, accompanied by heavily-laden mules. Shivaji immediately jumped to the conclusion that this must be a convoy of treasure, that had been sent past Bava Malang to gain the main road from Panwel to Chauk, Khapoli, and the Bhore Ghaut, so that it might not fall into the hands of Abaji Sondev, who was stationed on the more direct route by Badlapur and Karjat.

"That treasure must never reach Bijapur," he exclaimed. "You, Nettaji, must start in pursuit immediately with the three hundred bargirs. I will follow with the foot as swiftly as my Mawulis can run, and we shall not be far behind you."

Without a moment's delay Nettaji placed himself at the head of the cavalry, and led them off in the direction indicated, accompanied by Rama, who, to his great delight, had been mounted on a Dekkan horse, and

rode by his new master's side to show the way

A hard ride under the hot mid-day sun brought the hunters in sight of their quarry moving rapidly in the direction of Chauk. Pursuers and pursued quickened their pace when they caught sight of each other. Nettaji and his three hundred bargirs clattered through the village of Chauk as fast as their tired horses would go, close on the traces of the flying enemy. There was no time for him to turn aside from the chase for a moment and greet his parents. They were now rapidly gaining on the retreating convoy, for, with the utmost exertions, heavily-laden mules could not go so fast as horses.

Nettaji could now see that the escort consisted of about four hundred well-armed horsemen. This was a larger force than he thought it expedient to attack with his three hundred men, who were neither so well armed nor so well trained to bear the shock of battle as the mail-clad troopers of Bijapur. In resolving not to attack them he showed himself to be as prudent as he was valiant. Had he sought only his own fame, he would at once have

called upon his bargirs to charge the enemy, in the hope of gaining a glorious victory with inferior numbers. But he knew that Shivaji with the Mawulis would soon appear on the scene, and that then victory would be secure, and would be obtained with far less loss of life. He therefore determined to abstain for the present from coming to close quarters with the enemy, and merely tried by every means to delay their progress.

With this purpose in view, immediately after passing through Chauk he ordered his men to make feints of charging, but never to come to blows with the enemy. They rode their horses at full speed towards the rear, and, when the ground allowed them, against the flanks of the retreating Mahometans, but always, before actually crossing swords with the foe or coming within reach of their spears, they wheeled round their horses and rode off to a distance, where they would halt and return again to harass the enemy. In order to meet these feint attacks the Bijapur cavalry had continually to turn round and halt. This, however, did not diminish their rate of progress, because, though the escort halted, the

mules with their burdens always pressed on, and were presently overtaken by the troopers of the escort when they found that their pursuers did not venture to charge home

Nettaji had, however, devised more effectual means to check their progress. Just before entering Chauk he addressed himself to Rama, who was riding on his left hand

“When I last passed along this way I took special note of a narrow pass just below the town of Khalapur, which is now some five miles before us. On our right is a mountain, which I often used to climb in my boyhood when I lived in my father’s house at Chauk. If you and a hundred of the best mounted of our horsemen would go swiftly round that mountain, you might, unseen by the enemy, reach Khalapur and block up the road through that pass, so that no horse or mule could get through it.”

Rama replied that he knew the way well, and with the hundred horse assigned him turned off from the road to the right, so as to go round the mountain. This detachment reached Khalapur some time before the Bijapur convoy arrived there. Rama immediately

called upon the inhabitants of the village to come out and assist in blocking up the pass

“Shivaji,” he cried, “is coming in pursuit of a Bijapur convoy, whose flight must be cut off at this pass. Give us aid, if you wish to gain the favour of the mighty prince, who knows well how to reward his friends and punish his enemies. Refuse your aid, and he will burn your village to ashes.”

Under the influence of these promises and threats, and partly moved by sympathy with the champion of their religion and liberties, most of the strong men of the village turned out with woodmen’s axes in their hands, and helped Rama and his troopers to block the pass. A strong barricade of trees and rocks had scarcely been constructed, when the Bijapur convoy was seen hurrying up the road, separated by a very short interval from their pursuers. When they neared the village they were startled to find their farther progress arrested by a barrier over which it was impossible to ride. On either side of the pass the hilly ground was too steep and rocky for cavalry, so that they could not avoid the

pass and gain the road farther on by making a circuit to the right or the left. Fearing to attack the barricade, the Bijapur commander ordered his men to turn on their pursuers and drive them back to Chauk. Nettare, however, was too wary to await the charge. His light horsemen wheeled round and retired down the road in leisurely flight. The Bijapur cavalry did not venture to follow them to a great distance, as they could not leave their mules far behind them unprotected. So they presently had to halt and return to their baggage, whereupon Nettare and his men turned also and followed them.

CHAPTER XXII

FIGHT AT KHALAPUR

IN the meantime the spectators who had collected from the village to see the fight began clearly to recognize the helpless position of the Mahometan force, and all the waverers made up their mind to join the stronger side. Soon two or three hundred.

villagers came forward, armed with bows and javelins, to man the barricade. The Bijapur force was annoyed not only by arrows, but also by rocks rolled down upon the road from the heights that commanded it on either side. Their commander was now reduced to such straits that he sent a messenger to arrange a meeting with the Maratha commander. Nettareji readily agreed to the proposal, and met the leader of the enemy in the interval between the two forces at a safe distance from either.

The Bijapur commander was a strong black-bearded man, with thick moustaches, in the prime of life. He was not so tall as Nettareji, but his broad chest gave evidence of great strength, and from two scars visible on his face it might be inferred that he had had his share of hard fighting. He began by hurling words of contempt at Nettareji.

"Why," he asked, "do you peasants, timid stags as you are, follow tigers whom you cannot look in the face?"

"Why," said Nettareji, "do you, bold tigers as you call yourselves, flee before the timid stags? But a truce to such folly! A Maratha

is as good a man as a man of Bijapur, but that is no reason why we should court defeat by fighting against double our numbers. If you have merely called me to a conference to show your wit and your power of warring with words, we had better part."

"I had a more serious purpose," replied the Mahometan, "when I invited you to meet me, and this I will now unfold. We are, as you probably know, conveying a considerable amount of treasure from Kalyan to Bijapur. You are not strong enough to take it by force, although you can give us a great deal of trouble on our way up the Ghaut. Withdraw your robber band to Chauk, and I swear by the Prophet, on whom be blessing, that you will be paid five thousand rupees out of the treasury of Muhammad Adil Shah at Bijapur. Surely this is better than risking your lives and exposing yourselves to the wrath of that great king, and all for nothing, for your cowardly followers can never hope to wrest from us the treasure committed to our charge."

Nettaji's soul swelled with indignation as he heard these words.

“How dare you propose to me such a foul act of treachery? We are no robbers, but followers of the noble prince Shivaji, who has now risen in his might to free Maharashtra from the yoke of your king. For such an insult as you offered me I have more than half a mind to draw my sword and slay you.”

So speaking, he laid his hand upon the hilt of his sword. The other did the same, saying calmly

“Several men have tried to slay me, in battle and single combat, and none have yet succeeded. Perhaps if you draw your sword to slay me you may yourself be slain. But if you are eager to fight, and only fear our superior numbers, let us arrange a combat of five against five, and see whether the Moslem or the Maratha is the better man.”

Nettaji had really been for a long time chafing at the necessity imposed upon him of retreating before the enemy whenever they chose to charge. He readily embraced the opportunity now afforded of coming to blows with them at close quarters, the more so as the combat and the preliminary arrangements

would take some time, and his great object was to keep the convoy in its present position until Shrivaji should appear on the scene with his foot-soldiers

The first question that arose was whether the fight should take place on foot or on horseback. The Mahometan leader for his own purposes wished to have the combat on foot, urging that the narrow pass hardly afforded room for horsemanship. To this Nettaji replied that the combatants were horsemen, and should not be asked to fight otherwise than on horseback, and maintained his point so obstinately that his opponent yielded. Nettaji then pointed out that horses and riders were weary after the long flight and pursuit from Bava Malang to Khalapur. In order that they should be able to do themselves justice in the coming encounter, it was necessary that they should have two or three hours for rest and refreshment. This was also agreed to, and the two leaders returned to their respective forces to announce what had been the result of the conference.

The Maratha bargirs, like their leader, rejoiced at the chance of at last exchanging

hard blows with the enemy. They too were tired of playing again and again the game of mock charges, followed by hasty retreats. The difficulty was that so many wished to fight that it was hard to select the five champions. Nettareji was urged not to risk his valuable life in such an encounter, but he insisted that his position of leader gave him the privilege of taking the first place in danger as in honour. The choice of the other champions was left to the popular voice, and the four whose names were received with the loudest acclamations were selected to ride to the combat by Nettareji's side. Any of the four whose armour or weapons appeared to be weak and deficient were liberally provided with better by their less fortunate comrades, condemned to stand inactive as spectators. Then, after the three hours' respite allowed for rest and refreshment, a signal was given by trumpet-sound, and the five champions advanced from either side.

Nettareji in the centre met the Mussulman commander, and each bargir singled out his man. As soon as the ten warriors were engaged, the whole Bijapur force, shouting

“Din, din, Mahomet!” and “Allaho Akbar!”, charged, like one man, into the space that ought to have been kept clear for the chosen combatants. The treacherous purpose with which the combat had been arranged flashed immediately like lightning on Nettareji’s mind. He saw that the object was to engage him and his men in a general conflict from which it would be impossible for them to extricate themselves, and in which the superior numbers of the Bijapur force would be likely to secure the victory. The violence of his indignation roused a kind of berserker fury in his breast. To his own enthusiastic imagination he seemed to be inspired by the goddess Bhavani with the force of ten men. He shouted aloud with a voice of thunder the Maratha war-cry “Har, har, Mahadeo!”, and without waiting for his followers to join in the fray spurred Abu Jan violently against his treacherous foe, who was dashed to the ground by the fury of his onslaught and trodden to death under the hoofs of his own troopers. Then without a pause he charged right into the middle of the hostile band, hewing down the standard and standard-bearer, and dealing

blows to right and left without any thought of the defence of his own person. All shrank from meeting such a tremendous antagonist face to face. The thrusts that were made at his side as he passed did not pierce the well-wrought coat of mail which had once been Ayub Khan's. In this way he cut his way right through the enemy, and was met on the other side by Rama and the hundred men sent round to block the road, who had made their way through the barricade to join in the fray. With them he turned once more to attack the enemy, who were now, as it were, between two fires, for the main body of Nettaji's bargirs, when they saw the Mahometans make their treacherous charge, had not been slow to pull their spears out of the ground and dash forward to support their leader.

Nevertheless, though their captain was slain, and though they had to face both ways to meet the double attack, the superior numbers and discipline of the Mahometans might have prevailed, but for an unpleasant surprise that was in store for them. Just when they seemed to be gaining ground steadily on both fronts, hundreds of new combatants rushed

into the scene of battle. These were the Mawulis on foot, led by Shivaji in person, whose approach had been unnoticed while the minds of both forces were absorbed first in the preparations for the combat, and afterwards in the combat itself, and in the subsequent mêlée.

The Bijapur force was now entirely overpowered. Many had already fallen, and the rest could only escape total destruction by unconditional surrender. Nettare, exhausted by his excitement and the tremendous exertions he had made when, under the influence of his furious indignation, or, as he himself thought, spurred on by the inspiration of the goddess Bhavani, he had put forth more than his natural strength, sank into the arms of Shivaji. When he recovered from his swoon, Shivaji with kindly sympathy enquired into his hurts, and thanked him warmly for the great service he had done that day to Maharashtra.

Victors and vanquished halted for the night in the neighbouring village of Khalapur. On the following morning Shivaji showed the clemency that always characterized his con-

duct after victory. The captives were, of course, deprived of their arms and horses, but their lives were spared, and they were given enough grain to support them on their journey to Bijapur. Shivaji, finding that Nettaji had recovered from his temporary exhaustion, said to him:

“The first thing to be done is to convey this newly acquired treasure as quickly as possible to Rajgad, which will soon be the strongest fortress in the Dekkan. To convey it thither will be my task, and I will take with me as escort the brave bargirs who fought so well yesterday under your command. You, my friend, as I know, are eager to strike more blows with your strong arm for Maharashtra. You must therefore march the Mawulis back towards Kalyan, and do all you can to assist Abaji Sondev in his operations.”

So they parted and went on their several ways, Shivaji to Rajgad and Nettaji to the camp of Abaji Sondev at Kulgaon.

CHAPTER XXIII

FALL OF KALYAN

WHEN after a long march Nettare and the Mawulis left under his command reached Kulgaon, he found that Abaji Sondev had moved on to the village of Ambarnath, within four miles of Kalyan. There presently Nettare joined him, and informed him that Shivaji had gone to the Dekkan and left him (Abaji Sondev) in command of all his forces in the Konkan, with orders to make every effort to reduce Kalyan, and also, if possible, recover Rajmachi before Timbak Rao was forced to surrender Shrivardhan.

Abaji Sondev was delighted to hear of the trust that had been placed in him. He had already established communication with the strong and well-armed reinforcements that Shivaji had led to Bhopal. The brass cannons had been landed, and some of the most intelligent of the Mawulis were being taught how to work them, by a Portuguese deserter who had come up the river with them in the hope of some such employment. It was

expected with good reason that these fine new cannon fresh from Europe would be more than a match for all the old-fashioned guns that defended the ramparts of Kalyan

The town of Kalyan, which, according to the Chinese traveller Hiwen Thsang, was once the capital of Maharashtra, is built on the eastern bank of the river Ulhas. It was closely packed in a wall that enclosed not much more than seventy acres. At the north-west corner of the wall stood the citadel, on high ground overlooking the river, and separated from the town wall by a ditch. The citadel was strongly fortified, at any rate on the river side, but the walls of the town were weak and low. Inside the town there were handsome private houses many stories high, and mosques and temples, but the most beautiful building was the mosque of black stone which had been built a few years before on the south-west corner of the Shenale Lake, outside the city wall to the east of the town. On the north and east the country was richly wooded right up to the city walls. There were also beautiful Indian laburnums and other fine trees inside the town growing on

the banks of the many tanks, and protecting the buildings against the burning rays of the sun. And such protection was much needed, for it was the month of May, the hottest month of the whole year.

Soon after Nettaji's return, Abaji Sondev moved his head-quarters to Kone, on the western bank of the river, and placed his brass guns in position opposite the citadel. From this point, every morning and afternoon for many days in succession, the Portuguese gunner and the Mawulis whom he had trained in artillery practice poured shot and shell into the fort and the north-west corner of the town. The Maratha force also intercepted all supplies of provisions and merchandise coming up the river to the landing-place in the middle of the western wall of the town.

The result of this continued bombardment from the other side of the river was that the main portion of the garrison was always stationed in the citadel or behind the western wall of the fort. The other sides of the town were guarded with less vigilance. Also, as the cannonade regularly stopped for a considerable interval of time in the middle of

the day, the Mahometans at that time would retire from the walls to seek shelter from the sun and rest themselves after their exertions

This was the result which Abaji Sondev had anticipated, and on which he based his plans for the capture of the town. One day, when the morning cannonade was going on as usual, he sent Nettaji up the western side of the river with two or three thousand Mawulis, at a sufficient distance to ensure that they should not be descried by the watchmen on the turrets of the citadel. They had with them scaling-ladders made of the light and tough poles supplied by the bamboo. Four or five miles up-stream they crossed the river in boats that had been collected there for the purpose, and then they advanced against the northern side of the town under the shelter of the trees, which still cover the country right up to the wall.

They were the less likely to be observed, as it was an intensely hot day, and it was arranged that they should arrive at the wall just when the sun was blazing exactly overhead. At such a time no one would be likely to be standing on the wall of his own free

will to expose himself to the full fury of the sun. Even the sentries were oppressed with the burning heat, and sought refuge in any corner that afforded shelter from the sunlight. As they were thus drowsing away the time, lulled into false security by the immunity from attack that this part of the town had hitherto enjoyed, they were suddenly roused from their torpor by the rush of the Mawulis. They had hardly time to shout, when the ladders were firmly fixed on the top of the low walls, the enemy swarmed over, and the town was in their possession almost without a blow. Nettaji led his men straight towards the citadel, driving some of the garrison before him, and cutting off from that refuge many others, who were soon compelled to lay down their arms.

Though the town was captured, Mullana Ahmed, the Bijapur governor of the place, refused to surrender the citadel. So Abaji Sondev brought round his brass cannon from the other side of the river, and mounted them on rising ground at the north-west of the town wall close to the citadel. From this new position the Portuguese gunner recom-

menced the artillery duel that he had formerly carried on with the guns of the citadel across the waters of the Ulhas. In some respects the new engagement was conducted under conditions more favourable to the Marathas than the old. Their guns were now much nearer the mark, and the walls of the fort were much weaker on the town side than on the river side.

It was not long before a practicable breach was effected, and preparations were made to storm it without delay if it should be necessary to do so. Before delivering the assault, Abaji Sondev summoned the governor to surrender. He knew that Shivaji did not wish to carry the war to extremities, and therefore offered favourable terms, which were accepted. Mullana Ahmed was treated with the greatest respect, and eventually dismissed with honour, and sent back to Bijapur, where, however, according to Grant Duff, he never again was given any place of trust or emolument.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BETEL LEAF

TO celebrate his important victory Abaji Sondev gave a great feast in the citadel. Many goats were sacrificed to Bhavani, and their flesh was eaten by the Marathas with bread made of the grain called jowari, and with intoxicating liquor manufactured from the white flowers of the mowia and unrefined sugar. Somewhat apart from them sat in rows the high-caste Brahmins, eating, from leaves used as plates, sweetmeats and rice and pulse prepared by cooks of their own caste.

Then those who were most proficient at sword-play or horsemanship gave specimens of their skill. Expert swordsmen deftly sliced into two pieces lemons held in their comrades' hands without grazing the skin of the hands that held them. The horsemen hulled their spears at a mark while riding at full speed. They also went through an exercise called the *bothata*, of their skill in which the bargirs had already given a practical

exemplification in the pursuit of the convoy This consists in riding impetuously at each other with levelled spears, and suddenly, at the very moment of contact, wheeling round and taking to flight It was the constant practice of this exercise which enabled the Marathas to wear out an enemy by continual charges without being compelled to stand the shock of heavier and more heavily-armed cavalry than they could themselves put in the field Feats of archery were also performed, and the newly-constituted corps of musketeers showed what progress they had made with the Portuguese matchlocks

The festivities concluded with the distribution of *pansupari*¹, and the presentation of gay scarves as prizes to those who had done best in the sports Rich robes of honour were conferred upon Nettare, upon the Portuguese gunner, and upon others who had distinguished themselves in the capture of the town While the parting guests were still being sprinkled, according to the Indian custom, with rose-water and other scents, Abaji

¹ *pansupari* = betel leaf and betel nut, which the Indians are fond of chewing

was told that a messenger wished to see him on urgent business. He ordered the man to be introduced immediately.

The new arrival was evidently utterly exhausted, his garments were travel-stained, and he staggered through the room like a drunken man. When asked to deliver his message, for some moments he was unable to speak. At last he managed to tell his tale. Three days ago he had been sent out of Shrivardhan by Trimbak Rao, and had succeeded in slipping through the camp of the besiegers to the western wall of Rajmachi. Favoured by the darkness of night he climbed over the wall unobserved and descended to the plain. Had fortune favoured him, he would have reached the Maratha camp before Kalyan on the afternoon following the night on which he had descended from Rajmachi. But before he had proceeded far along the plain he was attacked by a violent fever. He did not know exactly how long he had lain unconscious in the hut of a wood-cutter somewhere near Neral. His mind was confused, he said, and he only knew that Trimbak Rao and his small garrison were reduced to desperate straits.

Perhaps the letter he brought would make the position of affairs plainer, and with that he extracted from his *bandi*¹ a letter from Trim-bak Rao addressed to Abaji Sondev, or whoever commanded the Maratha forces in the Konkan. The contents of the letter were as follows —

“We had hoped that by the strength of the fort of Shrivardhan and the help of the gods we should be able to hold out as long as our provisions lasted. But the enemy have succeeded in beginning a mine which, when completed, will make a great breach in the southern wall. We are unable to check the progress of this mine, and I have sure intelligence that it will be ready in five days from now. Unless help comes to us before five days have passed, our case is desperate, and we must surrender. I know your friendship, and trust that you will make every effort to save us. On the fourth day from this the moon rises at eleven o'clock. On that night, as soon as the moon shows herself, attack the enemy that encompasses us and we will sally from Shrivardhan to your aid. The enemy

¹ *bandi*, jacket

besieging us are now one thousand strong, half of their force having marched southward, as I hear, to attack the forts of Lohogad and Visapur”

In Maharashtra, when a warrior is required to volunteer to take the lead in some desperate enterprise, it is the custom for the king or commander-in-chief to throw down a leaf of the betel-tree, which is taken up by the man who volunteers to undertake the task. So Abaji Sondew now, recognizing the perilous nature of the attempt to relieve Rajmachi, threw down a betel leaf on the carpet before him. There were many brave men at that feast eager to win glory for themselves and to do great deeds for their country, but all hung back. At last Nettaji, who had only refrained from coming forward because in his modesty he thought that among those present a more experienced leader might be found to undertake the task, stepped on to the carpet, picked up the betel leaf, and placed it in his turban. A murmur of applause went round the room, and all acknowledged that no fitter leader could be found for such a perilous and important enterprise.

Abaji praised him for his gallantry, and asked him how many men he would like to take with him

“Give me a thousand Mawulis,” Nettaji replied, “one Mawuli for each Mahometan, and if we can but once get inside the fort, I hope we shall hold our own against the enemy, and place once more in the hands of Shivaji the key of the Door of the Konkan,” for such was the name given to Rajmachi, on account of its command of the Bhore Ghaut Pass, the most important route between the Dekkan and the Konkan

CHAPTER XXV

TREACHERY FOILED

THERE was need of the utmost expedition to secure success. On the night following this very day the moon would rise two hours after sunset, and it was feared that, if the attempt were deferred to a later day, the enemy would already be in possession of Shrivardhan, and the difficulties of the enterprise would be doubled

The arrangements were left entirely in Nettaji's hands, and he did not let the grass grow under his feet. He immediately called for Rama, his faithful attendant, and after telling him the news that had come from Rajmachi, said to him

"Can you, before to-morrow night, gain admittance by any means into the fort of Rajmachi?"

"I will try my best," replied Rama, "and have good hope of succeeding. Is it necessary for your plans that I should enter the fort armed?"

"No," said Nettaji, "I only wish you to take in with you a long strong rope."

"That will make my task more simple. Every day the country people take into the fort bundles of grass as fodder for the horses. It will be easy for me to gain admittance with a bundle of grass, and a long rope tied round it or concealed in the middle of the bundle will not be noticed. What am I to do with the rope when I get in?"

"On the eastern side of Rajmachi the wall of rock is so steep that there are no fortifications on the top. Let down a rope over the precipice. We shall be waiting for it below,

and by the help of the rope will climb up as soon as to-morrow's moon begins to cast her light upon the fortress"

"And if I fail?"

"Then we must try other means to get into the fortress But every moment is precious You must start at once I would lend you Abu Jan, but your Dekkan pony is safer for the rough ground you have to traverse"

Rama was about to move away, so that he might start immediately Nettaji called him back and said

"My chief anxiety is lest our intention should be made known to the enemy There were too many spectators present when Abaji threw the betel leaf on the carpet Some of those who were there may be in the pay of Bijapur, and may betray our plans We must be on the look-out for such treachery I will go with you to the gate of the town and see you off"

Rama had soon made his preparations with the help of his friend Gopal, who formerly belonged to the robber band at Bhaja, and was now an honest cavalry soldier in the service of Shivaji When they got to the gate,

the sentry told them that two horsemen had gone out five or ten minutes before them

Nettaji started, and whispered to Rama, "It may be as I feared. It is too likely that these men who have gone out before you have been sent off to warn Hafiz Khan of our coming. If this is so, they must never be allowed to reach Rajmachi alive. But one man against two is unfair odds. Will your companion go with you, and can you trust him?"

"He is true as steel," replied Rama.

"Then let him saddle his horse at once," said Nettaji, "and bring with him bows and arrows for you and himself, so that you may shoot down the traitorous spies if such they prove to be."

Gopal ran back to saddle his horse, and in a few minutes returned to the gate, provided, as Rama was, with a bag of grain as food for himself and his horse, and also with two bows and a dozen good arrows.

So Rama and Gopal started on their sure-footed Dekkan ponies from the eastern gate of Kalyan for Rajmachi, following the track of the unknown horsemen who had preceded

them. They had not ridden far when, on rounding a hill, they saw the two other horsemen a few miles ahead of them. They immediately quickened their pace, but found on trial that they were no better mounted than those whom they pursued. For several miles the chase continued thus, with about the same interval between the two parties.

Presently they heard behind them the hoofs of another horse, which was evidently gaining rapidly on pursuer and pursued. This was Nettaji, who, soon after the departure of Rama and Gopal, found strong reasons to confirm his suspicions of the character and intentions of the two men who had ridden from the gate before them. He therefore determined himself to take part in the chase. So he ordered his groom to saddle Abu Jan, and, while putting on his coat-of-mail, gave instructions that the thousand Mawulis chosen for the relief of Rajmachi should advance to Neral and there encamp for the night. After giving these orders he flung himself on his horse and galloped out of the gate after Rama and Gopal.

The longer stride and greater speed of his

gallant Arab enabled him to overtake them at a distance of four or five miles from Kalyan. Slackening his speed for a few moments to tell them why he had come, he again put spurs to his horse and rode after the two fugitives, whom he was sure to overtake, if he could keep his horse from stumbling and falling in its headlong course over rougher ground than it had been accustomed to. Riding swiftly, and watching carefully for holes and stones in his path, he gained upon them slowly but surely. At last they saw that they could not escape by the speed of their horses, and determined to rid themselves by force of their single pursuer before the other two should come up.

They therefore turned round, and, drawing their swords, stood on their defence. Nettaji, before attacking them, paused to ask them who they were, and what was their business.

"It does not concern you," one of them replied, "to know who we are, and our business at present is to prevent you from following us farther."

With these words they charged upon Nettaji, who calmly awaited their attack. They came

down upon him close together, with their two horses neck to neck and shoulder to shoulder. Nettareji, to avoid their combined charge, moved to the left, so that he might at first encounter only the foe who rode on the right hand. With him he crossed swords, while his other assailant was borne on ten or twenty yards by the impetus of his unresisted charge. Nettareji made short work of his first antagonist, delivering a blow on his head, which cleft his turban and his skull, and stretched him dead on the ground. He then turned to meet the other foe, who was coming back to aid his comrade. But when the man saw Nettareji brandishing the sword wet with his companion's blood, his heart failed him, and he fled back along the road he had come, in the extremity of his terror forgetting the two original pursuers, who were now coming up. When at last he noticed them, he turned his horse off the track and spurred it to its utmost speed. He might even then have escaped, but for the bows and arrows with which Nettareji's forethought had provided Rama and Gopal. They immediately put arrows to their bows, which they had already



"NETTAJI MADE SHORT WORK OF HIS FIRST ANTAGONIST"

strung, and shot with such sure aim that one arrow struck the horse on the shoulder and another the rider's right leg. The wounded horse rolled on the ground, and his rider, prevented by his wound from running, was seized by Rama and Gopal. When Nettaji came up, the man confessed his treachery, and in the hope of being pardoned revealed the fact that he had been bribed by a citizen of Kalyan, who pretended to be devoted to Shivaji's interest but was really in the pay of Bijapur. He was handed over as a prisoner to the charge of the officer whom Abaji Sondev had left in command of a small detachment at Kulgaon. Rama and Gopal proceeded on their way to Rajmachi. Nettaji went on more slowly to Neral, where he would be presently joined by his force of Mawulis. He was full of hope that he would succeed in his difficult enterprise, now that the imminent danger of treachery had been so fortunately averted.

CHAPTER XXVI

RAJMACHI RECOVERED

RAMA and Gopal proceeded on their journey, and ere nightfall reached the foot of the Bhor Ghaut. By the light of the moon they ascended the pass, and at midnight roused from his slumbers Rama's friend, the Khanda'lla farmer, whose acquaintance we have already made. Being well assured of his good faith, they told him their errand, and took counsel with him as to how it could best be carried out. He agreed with them that the surest way was to gain admittance with ropes concealed in bundles of grass. The Bijapur troops at Rajmachi were always in want of fodder for their horses, and gladly welcomed all who brought them fresh supplies. He himself said he would willingly go with them to the fort. By so doing the thrifty farmer said he would, as it were, kill two birds with one stone. He had a large supply of grass, for which he would gladly get the liberal prices by which the Mahometans tempted the peasantry to supply them with provisions for

themselves and their horses. Also, he would like full well to assist as far as he could in driving the enemy out of the neighbourhood.

Early in the morning Rama, Gopal, and the farmer started for Rajmachi, accompanied by three of the farm-servants, who bore heavy bundles of grass, and by two donkeys heavily laden with grain. When they came near the neck of land connecting Rajmachi with the main line of the Ghauts, they dismissed the attendants and put the loads of grass on their own backs. In this guise, driving the two donkeys before them, they came to the gate in the wall across the neck of land leading to Rajmachi.

They were readily admitted, and the farmer was soon busily engaged bargaining with the Bijapur officer in charge of the commissariat for the price of the grass and the grain. When the bargain was concluded, he asked permission for himself and his companions to rest for the day in the fort. This request being granted, he and Rama and Gopal took the two donkeys to the house of the Hindu priest who had charge of the little temple

enclosed in the walls of the fort, and there waited for the evening

As soon as it was quite dark they went to the point of the steep precipice where Nettaji proposed to ascend. By uniting the ropes attached to the donkeys to those with which the bundles of grass had been bound, they had what, when tied together, made a considerable length of rope. The precipice was so steep that it required no wall on the top. Fortunately the place was quite deserted, the Mahometans being more intent on watching the apparently doomed garrison of Shrivardhan than on taking precautions against such an improbable event as an attack upon themselves. Close to the edge of the precipice a stout teak-tree was growing. To this they firmly attached one end of the long rope they had pieced together. The other end, with a stone fastened to it, they threw over the edge of the precipice into the dark abyss below. They then concealed themselves in some neighbouring bushes and waited to see what would happen when the moon rose.

In the meantime Nettaji and his strong band of Mawulis had arrived in the neighbour-

hood of Rajmachi. A hundred of the boldest and most active he took to the foot of the precipice where the rope was to be let down. The remainder were sent to take up a position not far from the eastern gate of the fortress, with orders to be ready to burst open the gate or scale the wall across the neck of land as soon as the moon should appear.

When the sun had set and the twilight began to fade away, Nettaji peered anxiously into the darkness to see the rope as soon as it should be let down. Many things might have happened to prevent Rama from accomplishing his difficult task. If the rope did not appear, some change of plan would have to be adopted immediately, in order that Rajmachi might at any risk be stormed before the fatal mine blew up the wall of Shrivardhan.

At last, to his great relief he heard above him the noise of a stone striking against the rock, and saw the rope descending the side of the precipice. He hoped that he would soon hold it in his hands. But there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. What was his disappointment to find that the end of the rope after a time remained stationary

above his head, quite out of his reach. There was between him and the rope an interval of some twenty feet, and the wall of rock above him was so steep that it could not possibly be climbed. Thus from the height of hope he was suddenly plunged into the depth of despair. All his well-laid plans appeared to be frustrated by the deficiency of twenty feet in the length of the rope.

He called some of the Mawulis to him and showed them what had happened.

"There is nothing more to be done here," he said to them, "unless you can climb a perpendicular rock that would afford no foothold for a monkey. We must now leave this place and join the main body on the eastern side of the fortress."

"We can soon get over that difficulty," said one of those present. Speaking these words he called three of his comrades to the bottom of the sheer rock and leant against it. One of them climbed up and stood on his shoulders, another stood on the shoulders of the second, and the fourth, climbing up the first three and standing on the shoulders of the third, easily reached the rope. In this

way four human rungs were cleverly added to the ladder of ropes by which Rajmachi was to be scaled

Nettaji saw at once that the seemingly insuperable difficulty had been got over. Joyfully he called together the Mawulis and prepared for the ascent, for the light cast on a cloud that rested on the Ghauts in the east showed that the moon would soon be visible. Nettaji, according to his custom wherever danger was to be faced, led the way. The others followed one by one, till, just as the top of the moon's disk showed itself, the last of the Mawulis stood on the edge of the mountain.

The time appointed for concerted action had now arrived. Before the last man to reach the top had a moment to take breath after his climb, Nettaji, with Rama, Gopal, and his followers, rushed to attack the inside of the wall defending the neck of land, which was the only means of getting into Rajmachi from the east. Almost at the same moment the main body of the Mawulis attacked the wall on the outside. Trimbak Rao, too, had been waiting impatiently for the

coming of the moon, hoping against hope that it would bring relief to the hard-pressed little garrison under his command, which was otherwise doomed to be at the mercy of the enemy on the morrow. With what joy did his ear, sharpened by eager expectation, hear the rush of hurrying feet! Immediately he gave the order to his men to sally out and help their deliverers. Long cooped up as they had been within narrow limits, they rushed out impetuously against the besiegers who were in front of the gate and drove them back about a hundred yards.

The defenders of the wall, surprised and attacked on both sides at once, were soon overpowered. The gate was burst open, and the Mawulis from outside poured in. The drums were now beating to arms all over the mountain-top, and the Bijapur soldiers were hurriedly arming and arraying themselves for battle by torchlight. It was a scene of the wildest confusion. Each asked the other where the enemy was, and many of them rushed to and fro at random for want of leadership. Uniting, as chance directed, in small bodies of men, they could offer but in-

effectual resistance to the combined force of the Mawulis, who, led by Nettare, made straight for Shrivardhan. Trimbak Rao and his few men had, however, in the meantime been surrounded and cut off from the gate of Shrivardhan, and were in danger of being overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the enemy. They had rashly left the shelter of their fortress before their deliverers came up. When Nettare and his men arrived on the scene, the Bijapur troops surrounding Trimbak Rao retreated uphill towards Shrivardhan, and a large body of them, finding the gate open, went inside and shut the gate behind them.

Except the one or two hundred men who had taken refuge in Shrivardhan, the rest of the Bijapur garrison could make little more resistance. Most of them surrendered, some were killed, and some in the extremity of their alarm had met their death by rushing madly over the edge of the precipice. Thus by a strange freak of fortune the position of affairs was exactly reversed. The Mahometans now held Shrivardhan, and the Marathas held the rest of Rajmachi. This new state of things might have continued for a long time

The strength of Shrivardhan could defy direct assault, as Trimbak Rao had himself proved by repulsing with ease all the attempts made to storm it. In like manner now, when the Mawulis in the flush of their recent victory tried to force open the gate, they were repulsed with loss. Nettare was himself wounded in the leg by a javelin thrown from a window commanding the approach to the gate, and saw that there was little chance of scaling the walls or breaking in the gate. He began to think that Shrivardhan would remain uncaptured until its defenders were starved out.

Suddenly he remembered what had reduced the Maratha garrison there to the verge of despair. He called Trimbak Rao to his side, and asked him the position of the mine that the Bijapur sappers had made under the wall of Shrivardhan. On examination it was found to be in an even more advanced stage than Trimbak Rao had supposed. The mine in fact was completed, and the powder was all in position. Hafiz Khan had intended to explode it early on the following morning, so that if Nettare had come twelve hours later, he would

have found Shrivardhan already in possession of the enemy.

Nettaji now invited the Bijapur troops inside Shrivardhan to a parley, and called upon them to surrender immediately if they wished to have their lives spared. He told them that the mine under the wall was ready to be fired, should they be foolish enough to refuse his offer of terms. They were, however, so elated at their recent success in driving the Marathas back from the gate, that they would not listen to reason. So Nettaji gave the order, and the mine was fired. With a loud crash fragments of the wall and of the rock on which it was built were blown into the air. Before those within had recovered from the shock, the Mawulis rushed in over the ruins of the wall, killing the few that resisted and making captives of the rest.

Thus the whole of Rajmachi was now once more in possession of the Marathas.

CHAPTER XXVII

MISSION TO JAVLI

THE capture of Kalyan and the recovery of Rajmachī gave Shivaji undisputed possession of the northern Konkan and of a large portion of the Dekkan between the Bhima and the Nira. With the treasure found in Torna, and that captured at Khalapur, he strongly fortified Rajgad, and took a powerful army of infantry and cavalry into his pay. But for some time he refrained from further aggression upon Bijapur. He was constrained to this inactivity by filial duty. Muhammad Adil Shah had a valuable hostage in the person of Shahji, Shivaji's father, who was a prisoner at Bijapur, and was held responsible for all Shivaji's acts of hostility against the Bijapur government. If Shivaji made any further attacks upon Bijapur territory, he feared that his father might be put to a cruel death. So he entered into negotiations with the Mogul emperor, trying, not without success, to get him to exert pressure on Adil Shah in order that his father might be released, or be treated

less harshly All the time he was busily engaged organizing his power, and intriguing with the Hindu princes and chiefs of Maharashtra who still held aloof, and seemed unwilling to join him in the great enterprise to which he had devoted his life and all his political and warlike genius

Immediately to the south of the territory which now owned Shivaji's sway reigned Chandrarav More His capital town of Javli is about three miles to the north-west of Mahableshwar, the hill-station to which the Bombay Government retires in the hot months of May and October He was one of the most powerful Hindu princes in Maharashtra, and had a large army, mainly composed of Mawulis like those who mustered under Shivaji's standard If this powerful prince could only be induced to make common cause with Shivaji, the boundary of the Bijapur dominions would immediately have to be withdrawn far to the southward But the family of chiefs to which Chandrarav More belonged had long been conspicuous for its unswerving fidelity to Bijapur, and the present raja showed no disposition to break away from the traditional policy that

his ancestors had followed for seven generations

Shivaji, however, was determined, if possible, to win him over, and for this purpose called for the assistance of Nettaji, who was now married to Kashi, and had enjoyed two or three years of peace and domestic happiness in his old home at Chauk, but was ready, whenever opportunity offered, to join Shivaji again in active measures for the liberation of Maharashtra, certain that Kashi, who was as enthusiastic as himself in the great cause, would not prefer her own happiness to his glory and her country's cause. So when Shivaji summoned him to Rajgad, he obeyed the summons immediately, and, once more arming himself and mounting Abu Jan, rode away from his happy home, to perform whatever task his prince should think fit to lay upon him, for from boyhood to manhood and old age his soul was in accord with the thought of an English royalist poet, who was then in prison for his loyalty to his king, and wrote

“Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery

Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field,
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you, too, shall adore,
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more "

Nettaji might have expressed his feelings at parting in such terms as these, and Kashi, however sorrowful at his departure, would have appreciated the sentiment

On this occasion, however, he was not called upon to go to war, but to undertake a peaceful mission to the court of the Raja of Javli. Shivaji hoped that, going there with the halo of glory that he had won at Rajmachi and Kalyan, Nettaji might be as successful in peaceful negotiation as he had been in warlike exploits.

Our hero was received at Rajgad with the kindness and honour that his services had merited. He readily accepted the mission

entrusted to him, success in which would double the forces arrayed to fight in the cause of freedom. His instructions were by every means to persuade Chandrarav More to join in a patriotic and religious alliance against Bijapur. He was also to sound the raja on the subject of a marriage between Shivaji and his daughter, which would be a strong link to bind the allies together. With these instructions, and costly presents, and a train of twenty-five horsemen, Nettare rode to Javli.

He was given a most gracious reception by the raja. On the afternoon of his arrival he was received in the audience-chamber, a splendid apartment, gorgeously decorated. Instead of chairs there were cushions covered with costly silk of all the colours of the rainbow. The gaily-painted pillars had wreaths of coral hanging on the capitals. In the central position, at the end of the room, Chandrarav More sat on his own royal cushion, with a canopy of silk above his head, ornamented with figures of beasts and birds embroidered in silver and gold thread. On either side of the royal seat were to be seen his brother, his two sons, his

minister, Himmatrav, and the sinister visage of Bajī Shamraj, an emissary from the court of Bijapur. After the reception a troupe of dancing-women from distant Delhi gave a long and monotonous exhibition of their grace and agility for the amusement of hosts and guests. Such was the state with which Nettare was received in public, when he came to present the greetings and gifts of Shivaji.

It was not so easy to obtain a private interview. Nettare again and again requested that he might be granted an opportunity of seeing the raja alone, but he was put off day after day without his request being distinctly refused. In the meantime every effort was made to keep him amused. He was taken up the neighbouring mountain of Mahabaleshwar to visit the temple of Krishnabai, where, out of five holes in the rock, flow the tiny beginnings of five rivers—the Krishna, the Koyna, the Yenna, the Gayatri, and the Savitri. Over the great mass of mountains he roamed, either alone or in the company of the raja's sons, and gazed with wonder and delight on the sublime scenery. For let it not be supposed that the

natives of Western India are insensible to the beauty and grandeur of their mountains and valleys. Sufficient evidence to the contrary may be found even in the meaning of the words Rajmachī (royal terrace), Manranjan (heart pleasing), and Makrangad (the sweet or pleasant hill), which last is the name given by the natives of the country to the mountain known to Englishmen at Mahabaleshwar by the less poetical name of the Saddleback. So Nettare could gaze with rapture on the valley of the Solshi, shrouded and half-concealed in the blue mists from which it derives its extraordinary loveliness and its name of the Blue Valley. From the height now known as Arthur's Seat he loved to descry the summits of Torna and Rajgad, and look down on the valley of the Savitri four thousand feet below.

The summit of Mahabaleshwar is covered with beautiful woods, so that it is in some respects like a repetition of Matheran on a larger scale. But Nettare was not false to his first love. While confessing that his mind was impressed and almost overpowered by the grandeur and sublimity of the Mahabaleshwar

mountains, he nevertheless, with loving partiality, thought the woodland scenes of Matheran more charming and attractive than all the finest views that Mahabaleshwar could display

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PLOT OF SHAMRAJ

AMONG the amusements provided for Nettaji to make him less conscious of the lapse of time were hunts of the tiger, the panther, the mighty boar, and other wild beasts that abounded in the forest of Mahabaleshwar. After the long interval of inaction since the recapture of Rajmachi, Nettaji was glad to have such an opportunity of testing his strength, his accuracy of eye, and his command of his weapons, as was afforded by conflict with the wild beasts of the mountain and the forest. More than once he earned the gratitude of the poor peasants of the surrounding country by killing a tiger or a panther that had devoured their oxen, their sheep, and their goats. Often he wandered alone over the

mountains with his long spear, which was not only a weapon for defence against any wild beast or enemy whom he might encounter, but also served as an alpenstock in ascending and descending steep precipices

Once as he was walking thus alone, with his sword girt to his side and his long spear in his hand, along the southern slopes of the Mahabaleshwar mountains, on the look-out for any wild beast that might cross his path, or, failing such a meeting, content to enjoy the varying panorama that disclosed itself to him as he rounded the successive spurs, he was suddenly accosted by a Brahmin, whom he recollected to have seen among the priests at the temple of Krishnabai in the village of Mahabaleshwar

“Why are you loitering here?” the man exclaimed, catching his breath, owing to exhaustion caused by the unwonted violence of his exertions in traversing the seven miles that lay between the village of Mahabaleshwar and the place where he found Nettaji. “Why are you loitering here, when your prince is in imminent danger of death or capture?”

“How and when did you learn this?”

hastily enquired Nettaji, "and how can I in this distant spot aid my friend and prince in his danger, if what you say is true?"

"It matters not how I learnt it," replied the Brahmin "Let us save our breath that we may go as swiftly as possible to the Par Pass, for there it is that the danger threatens. When we arrive there, if time allows I will tell you all I know."

So speaking he led the way westward along the side of the mountain, running with great swiftness, considering the fact that he had already had a hard run, and that he had grown fat on the rich offerings made to the priests that guarded the shrine of Krishnabai. After proceeding thus rapidly for a mile or two, they struck the Par Pass, the old route from Mahabaleshwar to the Konkan, which goes over what is now called Bombay Point, and descends by corkscrew curves to the south of the mountain of Pratapgarh.

They were informed by a peasant that a body of twenty or thirty armed men had gone down the pass about an hour before them. From a rock beside the road they commanded a view of the winding course of

the pass, but could see no such body of men as the peasant spoke of

"They must be lying in ambush," said the Brahmin, "in yonder wood, and there, two miles farther on, I see, ascending the pass, another body of men, which must be, unless I am misinformed, the Prince Shivaji and his company on their way from his dwelling-place in Mahad. Unless we can give them warning they are but dead men."

Immediately leaping from the rock they hurried down the pass as rapidly as they could run without exposing themselves to the eyes of the party in ambush. They would, however, with all their haste have been too late, but for an accident that delayed for a few minutes the arrival of Shivaji at the wood from which he was to be attacked. A boy and girl happened to be playing on the path as Shivaji and his party passed. The little girl ran across their path, and was knocked over in the dust by one of the horsemen. Shivaji, immediately jumping off his horse, picked up and tried to comfort the crying child, who turned out to be more frightened than hurt. However, she cried

violently, and refused to be comforted until the kind-hearted prince distracted her attention from her fright by giving her a bright-coloured button, which he took out of his jacket. The child's tears immediately gave place to smiles, and Shivaji with his troop proceeded on his way, but this short delay probably saved his life, for it prevented him from reaching the wood before Nettaji and the Brahmin, who, even so, only managed to be there a few seconds before the arrival of the party ascending the pass.

Creeping under the trees, followed by the Brahmin, Nettaji saw a body of Mawulis crouching down in the undergrowth close to the path. They were all armed with bows, and had their arrows ready on the string. In their midst stood Bajī Shamraj, who was evidently their leader. He had a long match-lock, the muzzle of which he rested on the fork of a bush, so as to take better aim. His followers were evidently in a state of nervous apprehension on account of the character of the deed they had undertaken. They knew that they had been brought there to kill or seize Shivaji, and, like all the Hindus of

Western India, they regarded him as the destined liberator of the country, and half believed that he was an incarnation of the deity. So their hands trembled on their bow-strings, and their leader tried in vain to inspire them with his resolution.

"There he comes," he whispered, "at the head of his company. Let us see whether his godhead can resist the bullet from my matchlock."

So saying he carefully aimed his gun with intent to fire, telling his men to discharge their arrows at the same time and immediately after to rush out and seize Shivaji, if he were still alive. But ere he could carry out his intention, a great spear passed through his temples, and he fell down quite dead. Nettare had evidently not forgotten the skill in hurling the spear that he had learnt from the hermit on the woodland heights of Matheran.

When their leader fell thus suddenly by a spear thrown by an unseen foe, his followers fled with wild cries hither and thither into the surrounding jungle. To their excited imaginations it seemed that Bajji Shamraj's impious

words had brought upon his head the wrath of Shiva or Bhavani, and that the spear which killed him had been hurled by no hand of flesh and blood

Nettaji and the Brahmin priest issued from the wood to greet Shivaji and tell him what had happened. The Brahmin then at last found time to explain how he had been able so opportunely to give information of the dastardly plot. He had long been in secret an adherent of the national party, which had been formed at Javli with the object of inducing the raja to unite in alliance with Shivaji. As such he had been extremely suspicious of Baji Shamraj, who was known to be an unscrupulous hireling of the Bijapur Government. He had therefore dogged his steps in the hope of overhearing him when he was communicating his plans to his associate. Baji Shamraj was often known to have secret conferences with a Mawuli soldier of the raja's. The priest on that very afternoon had spoken to this Mawuli when he was worshipping in the temple, and threatened him with the vengeance of the gods if he did not immediately divulge what had been

said at these secret conferences Overcome by religious terrors, the man had revealed the plot. Shivaji, who often dwelt in the town of Mahad in the Konkan, was known to be coming up the Par Pass that afternoon Bajī Shamraj, so the Mawuli said, was going to waylay him, and for that purpose thirty of his Mawuli soldiers, chosen for their bad characters, had been obhgingly put at his disposal by the Raja of Javli By this means he hoped to fulfil the engagement that he had given to the Bijapur Government, that he would capture or kill Shivaji

The Brahmin, immediately he learnt the plot, had gone in search of Nettareji, and by good fortune had been told where he was to be found.

Shivaji embraced Nettareji, and thanked him for saving his life

"In the meantime," he said, "you must return to Javli as if nothing had occurred It does not suit my plans at present to go to open war with the raja Perhaps the time will come ere long when I can punish him by more skilful use of the weapons he has employed against my life"

"I fear," said Nettaji, "that I have not enough command over my countenance to meet the raja and not show my scorn of his base treachery"

"Yes, my friend," replied Shivaji, "you are too frank and open and truthful to be able to cope with the cunning of the raja and his wily minister. The noble tiger can slay an enemy with one blow of his mighty paw, but is not fit to spin delicate spider webs of diplomatic deceit. In future I shall know that you are my right hand only in war, and will employ others when there is need of courtly dissimulation. Only endure for a few days to conceal your feelings of indignation. As soon as possible I will recall you, and send in your place as wily and unscrupulous an intriguer as Chandrarav More or his minister, Himmatrav"

With these words, and after thanking Nettaji again for the great service he had done, Shivaji proceeded on his way

CHAPTER XXIX

NETTAJI A PRISONER

SHIVAJI did not forget his promise. In a few days there came from Raigadh a Brahmin named Ragho Ballal, who took Nettaji's place, and informed him that Shivaji would presently require his services elsewhere, and that in the meantime he might return to his home. So Nettaji mounted Abu Jan and rode away alone, ordering the twenty-five troopers who had accompanied him to remain at Javli as an escort for his successor.

It was somewhat rash of him to venture to ride alone through the territory of a raja whom he knew to be at heart bitterly hostile to Shivaji and friendly to Bijapur. Although the Mawulis, who had taken part in the attempt to seize Shivaji, spread marvellous tales of the supernatural aid by which he had been rescued from the hand of his enemies, the true version of what had happened found its way to the ears of the clerk of Bajī Shamraj,

who determined to atone for his master's failure and avenge his death by killing or capturing Nettaji. The liberal supply of the gold of Bijapur with which he was provided, and the connivance of the chief officials of Javli, enabled him to hire half a dozen desperadoes to aid him in his evil design, and when he heard that Nettaji was leaving Javli without an escort, he determined to carry it into execution.

There are three principal routes from Javli and Mahabaleshwar. You may go eastward either to the sacred city of Wai, or to Satara, and so on over the Dekkan table-land to Poona. Or you may descend to the Konkan by the Pai Pass in which Shivaji had been waylaid. As Wai was the head-quarters of a Bijapur mokasadar or governor who had under his charge Kamalgad and other neighbouring forts, Nettaji could not prudently go that way. Still worse would it have been to go by way of Satara, which was not only farther from his direct course, but also was an important provincial capital under the Bijapur Government, and commanded by a strong fortress often used as a state prison. There-

fore Nettaji thought it best to go westward and descend to the Konkan by the Pal Pass

The six villains in the pay of Bajī Shamiāj's clerk dogged his steps down the mountain till he rested at mid-day at the source of a mountain stream under the shadow of a clump of mango-trees. Having first supplied his good steed with grain and allowed him to drink his fill, he proceeded to take his own mid-day meal. When he bent down to drink the pure water issuing from the rock, the villains seized their opportunity, and rushed suddenly down upon him from the trees behind whose trunks they had been hiding during his repast. Before he had time to draw his sword his arms were seized, and in spite of his great strength and the violent efforts that he made he could not shake himself free. He was soon disarmed, and, with his hands bound behind his back, was mounted on his horse. Thence he was led round the Mahabaleshwar mountain to Satara by unfrequented paths, so that if possible the news of his capture might not reach Shivaji. No one witnessed the attack made upon him, and his captors, under the

influence of fear and bribes, kept such careful watch over their tongues that for a long time his disappearance remained an insoluble mystery Shivaji ascertained that he had left Javli unattended, but could not discover whether he was dead or alive

On arriving at Satara, Nettaji was taken, with his head muffled up so that no one might recognize him, to the fortress built on a flat-topped hill that rises nearly a thousand feet high to the south of the town He was put in close confinement as a rebel against the Bijapur Government In the narrow limits of his prison he remained for many months, entirely cut off from the outer world His jailers were allowed to give him no news of the startling events that happened at Javli after his departure and capture He was not told how Ragho Ballal, who succeeded him as Shivaji's representative at the court of Javli, had at a private interview stabbed the raja to the heart, and how Sambhaji Kavji at the same time slew the raja's brother, how Shivaji, who, in anticipation of the assassination, had concentrated large forces at the village of Mahabaleshwar, ad-

vanced immediately on Javli and overpowered the raja's sons and his minister, Himmatrav. It was thus that Shivaji effected the conquest of Javli, and doubled his strength by adding to his army the thirty or forty thousand Mawulis who had formerly fought under the banner of Javli. To secure his possession of his new territory he commissioned his minister, Moro Trimbak Pingle, to build a strong fort on a high hill commanding the Par Pass. The new fort was called Pratapgairh, a name associated for ever with one of the most dramatic incidents recorded in history.

Although Nettaji was distressed at being condemned to inaction, his health did not suffer from his confinement. He was allowed to walk for an hour every day on the battlements, and even in the narrow room in which he was imprisoned he could go through the *dund* and some of the other exercises by which, under the eye of his preceptor the hermit, he had built up his bodily strength on the summit of Matheran. Also, his prison was favourably situated. Satara has a cool and healthy site on the high table-land of

the Dekkan, 2320 feet above the level of the sea. The fortress on the neighbouring hill rises a thousand feet higher, and is correspondingly cooler and healthier. The breezes that blew with refreshing coolness on his brow as he took his daily walk on the ramparts prevented him from yielding to despair, although his mind was often tortured with anxiety on account of his wife and children, and with suspense as to how the great struggle for freedom, in which he could no longer take a part, was progressing.

The indulgent treatment of the prisoner was not, however, dictated by humanity. It was intended to smooth the way for the seduction of Nettaji from the path of loyalty and patriotism. The commandant of the fort often joined him on the ramparts, and enlarged upon the wealth and power of Bijapur, and the liberality with which the government rewarded its feudatories, whether Hindu or Mahometan. Nettaji listened with attention and interest, ready to obtain as much information as possible about the government and policy of the Mahometan power which had so long, from its splendid capital in the Dekkan,

ruled over the greater part of Maharashtra. He was lonely. The commandant was a clever man and a brilliant conversationalist. So these conversations made Nettare's period of confinement less irksome, until the day came when the commandant thought fit to reveal his intentions. Then for the third time Nettare was tempted by a Bijapur official to prove a traitor to his country, and a third time he rejected the proposal with the scorn it merited.

"I would rather die," he exclaimed, "than join the oppressors of my country." in

The commandant saw clearly from the tone in which the refusal was made that it was useless to repeat the offer. He therefore threw aside the mask of suave politeness that he had previously worn, and contemptuously replied:

"Such words are easy to say, but not so easy to carry out in action. You have often faced death in the field of war, when your soul was filled with the ardour of battle. We shall see whether you can face death as resolutely when he approaches you stealthily, step by step, and you cannot strike a blow in

your defence You have scorned my kindness, and shall now taste my anger ”

With these words and an angry gesture he departed The terrible import of what the commandant had said became evident on the following day At the hour when the jailer had been used to come to invite Nettaji to his daily walk on the ramparts, the commandant appeared with six soldiers in his train and removed Nettaji to a narrow dungeon half-sunk beneath the ground The entrance was through a small square aperture in the wall, that served as door and window, and admitted but scanty light into the interior of the prison Through this opening, which was level with the ground of the fort but higher than the floor of the dungeon, Nettaji was thrust by the soldiers so roughly, that, if he had not been a young and active man, he might have broken his leg in descending unexpectedly to the lower level of the dungeon floor

Two cunning Hindu masons were employed to close up the door or window of the dungeon with cross bars of iron, which divided it into nine compartments, each of them a foot square While they were occupied in

this work, the commandant cried out in a loud voice to Nettare

“ In this dungeon you shall abide until you choose to listen to the gracious offers of our great king If you are still stubborn on the ninth morning from now, you will then have your last glimpse of the kindly light of day For know that every day one of the nine divisions of the door of your prison will be filled up with brickwork Therefore, think well what awaits you, if you cannot quell your rebellious spirit ”

Nettare heard the horrible threat, and maintained the proud silence that he had observed since the first attempt to seduce him had been made by the commandant With the calm resolution inspired by fatalism and the consciousness of doing what was right, he could face death by starvation in a dark dungeon as bravely as he could face it in the sunlight changing blows with the enemy.

“ If it is written on my forehead,” he said to himself, “ that I should die for my country, what does it matter whether death comes upon me here or there, soon or late ? There are thousands of brave warriors who have now

drawn the sword for the cause of freedom, and the loss of one man will make little difference ”

But his stoical resignation was less able to endure the thought of what Kashi, his beloved wife, would suffer from his death. In every country a widow's lot is sad. In India it is saddest of all, because the widow is treated as if she were somehow responsible for her husband's death.

The following morning showed that the commandant's words were no idle threat. An hour after sunrise he came again with the two masons and superintended their work as they filled up the first of the nine sections of the window with brickwork. A sufficient supply of food and water for the day was at the same time put in through one of the other apertures. Again Nettaji was invited to purchase his life and liberty by accepting the offers of the Bijapur Government. Again he refused to make any reply. But he did not disdain to take the food and water. Although he was ready to die for his country, he thought it would be an act of disobedience to the gods to throw away his life. While there was life

there was hope, and he had a presentiment that it was not his lot to perish like a rat, of hunger, in a dark hole

Nevertheless day after day passed, and every morning a square of daylight was cut off from the prisoner's view, until only four squares remained that were not filled up. But as the darkness increased, he saw more clearly in his imagination visions, in which Bhavanî gave him promise of succour, so that he never entirely lost heart, and waited with resignation to see whether the gods whom he served would help him in their own good time and in their own way

CHAPTER XXX

THE DUNGEON WINDOW

A FEW days after the transference of Nettajî to the dungeon, a lady arrived at the fort of Satara, accompanied by her two children and an escort. She was the Hindu wife of a Bijapur officer of high rank. Her husband was coming to succeed the comman-

dant who had thrown Nettaji into the dungeon. He had been detained on the way by the necessity of enquiring into some local disturbances, and had sent his wife and children on before him, promising to follow them in the course of a few days.

On the evening of her arrival she was sitting on the ramparts with her waiting-woman, and gazing wistfully over the wide and beautiful prospect spread out before her eyes, and enjoying, as Nettaji had done only a few days before, the cool western breeze that fanned her brow. She turned round to say something to her companion, when she noticed close behind her the aperture of the dungeon in which Nettaji was confined.

"What," she asked, "is that strange window half blocked up with brickwork?"

Her companion told her that it was the entrance to the dungeon in which a famous Hindu rebel was confined, and that in five days more the window would be entirely closed up, so that the prisoner would never again see the light of day. The lady wept when she heard of the cruel fate that awaited the unfortunate prisoner. Although she was

married to a Mahometan, the tie of a common religion made her tender heart sympathize with one who was a Hindu like herself

“Can nothing be done to save him?” she said “If he must die, why should he be condemned to a lingering death like this? Perhaps he is punished for some base act of cruelty or treachery But even so, surely death is a sufficient punishment for any crime”

Her companion replied that the prisoner's only fault was that he was a great warrior, who had fought against the armies of Bijapur under the banner of Shivaji

All night long the lady could not sleep Her mind was oppressed by the thought of the prisoner's cruel fate, and she longed to do something to save him, or at least alleviate his misery In the morning she found herself drawn by a sort of fascination to the neighbourhood of the dungeon, although the sight of it could only increase her depression There she saw the two workmen filling up another partition in the window, and callously singing as they carried out their cruel task.

Shocked beyond expression by what she had seen, she returned, weeping bitterly, to her apartment

“Ah me,” she groaned, “for the evil lot of us poor women! Why have the gods filled our hearts full of sympathy for suffering, if we have to sit with our hands folded and do nothing to help the oppressed?”

For an hour or more she sat in an attitude of utter dejection, mourning over her helplessness. She was naturally timid, and so modest that she shrank from in any way trespassing beyond the limits that the custom of female seclusion imposes on Indian women. On the other hand, her gentleness and sympathy with suffering and her indignation at cruelty urged her strongly in this instance to energetic action. What was she to do? Should she go to the commandant, and, falling on her knees before him, beseech him to spare the prisoner? She had heard enough of his relentless cruelty to know that such an appeal was not likely to avail much. Besides, she was the wife of the man who was coming to supersede him, and, as such, she thought that anything she might say in the prisoner's cause

was only likely to incense him more, and make him perhaps hasten to carry out his cruel purpose to the bitter end before her husband came to take command of the fortress

Then a thought struck her, and she said to her attendant

“This room is dismally dark I should like a new window put into the wall on the west There were two men to-day working at that horrible dungeon Please ask one of them to come and see me”

The girl went, and presently returned with one of the two masons, who made his obeisance and asked what commands the lady had to give him He knew she was the wife of the new commandant, and was eager to do anything that would be likely to gain her favour

The lady replied that she wished a window opened in the western wall of her room, so that she might look on Yavteshwar and the other hills that bounded the horizon on the west Then she added

“You appear to be a clever workman, but I wonder that you, a Hindu, can sing at your work when you are constructing a living

tomb for a brave warrior, whose only fault is that he has fought too bravely for the liberty of your country and for the temples of the gods whom you worship”

“Lady,” replied the mason, “it has always been my practice to sing at my work since I was a child I can work better when I am singing, but my songs are not always very merry When I am sad, as I was at my work this morning, I sing sad songs For, like you, my heart is sore for the brave warrior shut up in that dungeon But I am a poor man, and dare not say more It is dangerous in a Bijapur fortress to show sympathy for a Maratha rebel”

Here he paused, and gave a significant look towards the lady’s attendant

“Oh, you need not be afraid of Tayee,” said the lady “She too is a Hindu like ourselves, though she comes from a distant part of India, and has never before been in Maharashtra She would never betray you or me”

“Then,” said the mason, “I will venture to tell you what I have done, at the risk of my life, to give the prisoner a chance, however small, of escape.”

He then explained that the framework of iron bars fixed in the square window of the dungeon was so constructed that the smaller square, consisting of the four compartments in the top corner on the left of the window, could be easily opened from the inside by pressing a spring

"But how," he said, "am I to tell the prisoner this? Whenever I am working at the window I am closely watched by the commandant or one of his officers, and it is impossible for me to say anything to the prisoner without being overheard. Then even if he could open the window, he would still be enclosed by the walls of a hostile fortress, and no nearer liberty than he was before."

The lady sighed at the apparent helplessness of her position. However, she was determined to leave no stone unturned in the prosecution of her merciful purpose.

"I suppose," she said to the mason, "that the four compartments of the window that are still not bricked up are those which form the casement that can be opened from the inside."

"Yes," replied the mason. "I bricked up

the other five compartments first, in the hope that at the last moment some opportunity might arise of helping the prisoner to escape ”

“ Such an opportunity has now presented itself,” said the lady “ The first difficulty can easily be got over When you go to your work to-morrow morning, sing as usual, or rather sing more loudly than usual, so that the prisoner may hear the words you sing ”

“ What good will that do ? ” asked the mason

“ First introduce into your song,” said the lady, “ a strain of hope to attract his attention Then mix up with your song words telling him of the secret spring, and bidding him open it to-morrow when the gong of the fortress strikes the hour of midnight ”

“ And what then ? ”

“ We shall be there to receive him as he emerges from the prison You must then take him in the dark to your lodgings His absence will not be detected until the hour in the morning when they take him his meat and drink Before that hour he must have

left the fortress disguised as your fellow work man."

The mason saw that the plan was feasible. But it was very dangerous, and he shrank from running such a terrible risk for the sake of an utter stranger. The lady appealed to the kindly feelings that had prompted him to construct the iron framework so as to give the prisoner a chance of escape. She also appealed to his avarice, and offered him a rich reward if he would give her his assistance in carrying out her scheme. Whether the higher or lower motives prevailed, or whether, as is often the case, he was actuated by both, he yielded to her entreaties, and, returning to his lodging, began to think of the composition of the song on which would depend the freedom or captivity, the life or death, of his imprisoned countryman.

Fortunately, when he went to his work on the following morning, the officer appointed to watch him was an Arab, who did not know a word of the Maratha language. He could, therefore, sing his song loudly and distinctly without the least fear of his purpose being detected. He even ventured to ask the

contented himself with marking carefully the exact position of the hidden spring, but abstained from touching it until daylight should entirely disappear.

That evening darkness came sooner than usual. In the afternoon great clouds began to collect in the east, which grew larger and blacker as night came on. The sun had not sunk far below the mountains in the west before Nettareji ventured to touch the spring and found that by so doing he could easily bend inwards the cross-bars in that part of the window. So he closed them again, and in the darkness waited with what patience he could for the hour of midnight.

Very slowly the minutes and hours passed. The air was close and sultry, and it appeared that a storm was brewing, which might perhaps be favourable to his escape from the fortress if he could only succeed in getting out of the dungeon. As the time drew near the distant rumble of thunder was heard reverberating along the mountains round Satar. At last the gong sounded the hour of midnight. Immediately the first stroke was heard, Nettareji touched the spring, and with

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That evening darkness came sooner than usual. In the afternoon great clouds began to collect in the east, which grew larger and blacker as night came on. The sun had not sunk far below the mountains in the west before Nettaji ventured to touch the spring, and found that by so doing he could easily bend inwards the cross-bars in that part of the window. So he closed them again, and in the darkness waited with what patience he could for the hour of midnight.

Very slowly the minutes and hours passed. The air was close and sultry, and it appeared that a storm was brewing, which might perhaps be favourable to his escape from the fortress if he could only succeed in getting out of the dungeon. As the time drew near, the distant rumble of thunder was heard reverberating along the mountains round Satara. At last the gong sounded the hour of midnight. Immediately the first stroke was heard, Nettaji touched the spring, and with-

out any difficulty pulled in the iron bars. Almost at the same moment the hand of the mason standing outside displaced the brickwork that he had added the morning before. Nettaji then squeezed himself through the aperture, and stood outside the dungeon which was intended to be his tomb.

The pitch darkness prevented him from being able to see who his friends were. All at once a vivid flash of lightning illumined the whole fort. He saw before him a man and two veiled women. One of the latter cried out in tones that thrilled the depth of his soul with memories of his childhood.

“Nettya, my brother! Is it thus we meet again?”

“Gunga! Can it be thou, my sister, whom we have so long numbered with the dead?”

Then brother and sister fell on each other's necks and wept tears of mingled sorrow and joy.

As they tenderly embraced each other, there was a tremendous peal of thunder, followed by a lightning flash that again for a moment lit up the whole scene with brightness like that of noonday. The brilliant light flashed on

the drawn sword of a new actor who had appeared on the scene, and now rushed upon the brother and sister, calling out in tones of anger and mental agony

“Is this my modest Gunga, who comes out at midnight to meet her lover? But, by Allah, he at least shall die on the spot!”

It was Gunga's husband, who had arrived at the fortress before he was expected. In his eagerness to see his much-loved wife he had ridden on in the darkness in advance of his troopers, and had arrived at the fortress some hours before them. So impatient was he that, without even waiting for a torch-bearer to light him on his way, he hurried alone from the entrance-gate to the centre of the fort, and, happening to pass by the dungeon in which Nettaji had been confined, to his horror saw his wife embracing a stranger.

Gunga threw herself at his feet. “Slay him not, Rustum,” she cried, “it is my brother, Nettaji, of whom I have so often spoken to you, it is he whom you so nobly spared when he lay wounded on the ground before you long ago by the river Patalgunga

Spare his life again, my husband, for thy Gunga's sake "

Rustum Zuman sheathed his sword and asked for an explanation of what he saw. But Gunga's nerves had been overstrained. It had been a fearful effort for a woman of her timid and retiring nature to come out in a thunderstorm at midnight and free from his dungeon a man condemned to a cruel death. The excitement and suspense had been almost more than she could bear, even before she recognized her brother and was surprised by the unexpected coming of her husband. The fear of an encounter between the two men whom she loved best in the world gave the finishing touch to her alarms, and she swooned away.

Guided by her attendant and the mason, her husband and her brother carried the unconscious lady to the apartments she had left on her errand of mercy. When she recovered consciousness her first words were.

"My brother! My husband!"

A smile of heart-felt joy overspread her countenance as her opening eyes saw them both standing beside her couch.

“Assure thyself that all is well,” said her husband, “and that thou wilt see thy brother again on the morrow. But now we must leave thee for the present in the hands of thy faithful Tayee, that thou mayest take the rest required by exhausted nature.”

With these words he retired with Nettaji to another room, to get from him an explanation of the position of affairs and consider what was to be done next.

When Nettaji had explained how he had been captured, and how the commandant had tried to gain him over to Bijapur, first by gentle and subsequently by harsh treatment, and how he had finally been confined in a dungeon which was to be his sepulchre if he remained obstinate, Rustum Zuman remarked

“Information of the commandant’s cruelty and oppression has reached the ears of the King of Bijapur, and that is why he has been recalled and I have been sent out to take his place. Milder counsels now prevail at the court, and every attempt is to be made to conciliate those who have risen in rebellion against the royal authority. Shahji, the

father of Shivaji, has been released from his dungeon, and, but for what has happened, my first action on taking over the command of this fortress would have been in like manner to release you from your dungeon and treat you with the honour due to a brave enemy. But how am I to account for your escape, and your presence in my house?"

"That can be easily done," replied Nettare, "if fortune favours me as she has done already. The heavy rain now falling makes the night darker than ever. I can return to the dungeon as secretly and unobserved as I left it, and on the morrow you can take what measures seem to you best for my transfer to more honourable captivity."

Rustum Zuman was reluctant to send his wife's brother back to his dungeon cell. However, he could not but see that it was the best way out of the difficulty, and he consented.

So Nettare, favoured by the darkness, returned unnoticed to the dungeon, and having re-entered it, pulled back the iron bars to their original position. The mason, who accompanied him, replaced the bricks, so that

in the morning there was nothing to give any sign of what had happened in the night.

CHAPTER XXXII

BROTHER AND SISTER

NEXT day at an early hour Rustum Zuman formally took over the command of the fortress from his predecessor, who, indignant at being superseded, and unwilling to remain as a guest where he had enjoyed absolute command, immediately left Satara. Soon after his departure Nettaji was taken out of his dungeon, and assigned quarters where he could live in honourable captivity. On giving his oath not to attempt to escape, he was allowed freedom to go where he pleased within the walls of the fortress.

Once more he could walk on the ramparts, and there he would meet his long-lost sister, and talk with her of the home of their childhood and their parents, and all that had happened since the fatal day when Gunga had

left Chauk with the marriage procession that was to conduct her to Vadgaon

"How," asked Nettaji, "was it that thou never sentest us any word that thou wert still alive?"

"I was so ashamed," she said, "to be the wife of a Mahometan, that I preferred that you should all think me dead"

"It must indeed," he replied, "have been terrible for thee to submit to such a lot as to marry one who despises as idols the gods of our fathers Would it not indeed have been better for thee to die, as many a brave Rajputni has done, rather than submit to such an indignity?"

"That too entered my mind, my brother," she replied, "and once I even procured a dagger. But I am a poor weak timid woman I could not drive it into my heart, and, coward that I am, I lived on"

"Last night thou wert brave enough"

"No, Nettya, I am not brave. Last night I trembled all over when I went out into the dark Those awful peals of thunder and the lightning made me half-dead with terror But pity was stronger than my fear Yes,

Nettaji, I am at heart a coward and I could not kill myself. And then what did I know of the bridegroom I was to have married at Vadgaon? I had never seen him. And," here she turned away her face to hide the blush of shame that mantled on her cheek, "let me confess that against my will I learnt to love Rustum Zuman. Had he not spared my brother's life? And how noble and generous he was, and how patient with me in my distress! And how faithfully he loved me, though tears made my eyes dim and sorrow made my face wan! He would call me the flower he had culled on the banks of the Patalgunga¹, and truly I myself, as I told him, had become a Patalgunga (thin Gunga) with weeping ever for the loss of my country, my parents, and of thee, my brother. How could he, young and handsome, of noble birth, prefer poor me to all the gay ladies of Bijapur, who would gladly have given him their hands and their hearts?"

Gunga shuddered at the recital of the dangers that her brother had faced at Rajmachi,

¹ This river, being of no great size, is called a thin Gunga, or Ganges.

Kalyan, and in the robbers' cave at Bhaja, and smiled at the capture of the boastful Ayub Khan

When Rustum Zuman heard of Ayub Khan, he said

"Ayub Khan is, as he said, a brother-in-law of Muhammad Adil Shah, the brother of his favourite wife I was strictly enjoined by the king to ascertain whether he was alive, and, if so, to negotiate his release Perhaps Shivaji would send him back to us in exchange for you "

With this purpose he entered into communication with the Maratha leader, who was rejoiced to hear that Nettaji was alive, and gladly agreed to the change of prisoners proposed So, after no long delay Ayub Khan arrived at Satara, and Nettaji, no longer a captive, had his last talk with his sister on the ramparts of the fortress

"We may never meet again, dear sister," he said "It is sad to part with thee, doubly sad to leave thee in the household of one of the enemies of our country and our religion Would it not be better for thee to come home with me to thy mother's home and to the gods of our fathers?"

“Nay, my brother,” she replied, “how could I leave the husband to whom I have pledged my faith? Such an act could never be acceptable in the sight of heaven. And how could I, after being the wife of a Mahometan, live in my father’s house? Death would be my only refuge. Think not, brother dear, that I shall be utterly miserable. My duty to my noble husband, and to the children I have borne him, will prevent me from wasting away my life and marring his happiness by indulgence in unavailing tears. Nor think too much of the difference between our religions. My husband allows me to worship the gods of my country, and after all I cannot believe that there is such a gulf in the sight of God between Hindu and Mahometan as the Brahmins would make out. Have not some of the greatest saints and prophets of Maharashtra taught that, in spite of difference of images and creeds, there is one God who is the father of all men, that Mahomet’s Allah and the Rama of Ramdas are essentially one and the same god?”

After taking a tender farewell of his sister, Nettaji was escorted by Rustum Zuman many

miles from Satara on his way to his home. The two brothers-in-law had learnt to honour and love each other as two brave and noble men can do, however different in nationality and religion. They swore to be true friends to each other, as far as their duties to their respective princes and religions would allow. In the wars that raged in Western India all through their lifetime they had afterwards many opportunities of exchanging acts of friendship, both when they were opposed in battle array and when the shifting politics of the day induced Shivaji to ally himself with Bijapur against the Moguls. When Shaisteh Khan and Jeswant Singh of Jodhpur were fighting against the Marathas in the neighbourhood of Poona, history records that Nettaji Palkar was wounded, and would have been captured, had not Rustum Zuman, who was then commander of the Bijapur forces, enabled him to escape. Later, when Bijapur was torn by internal factions during the minority of Sultan Shikandar Adil Shah, and Rustum Zuman was banished by the intrigues of his political enemies, Nettaji was able to give him and his family an asylum in Ma-

harashtra, so that Gunga had an opportunity of revisiting Chauk and her old parents in their declining years

The rest of the actions of Nettare Palkar and his might will be found in the Maratha chronicles. In 1657 he was appointed *sarnobat*, or commander-in-chief of Shivaji's army. In 1659 he was summoned up from the Konkan to take part in the operations against Afzul Khan. He had no hand in the actual killing of the Bijapur commander, in which Shivaji was assisted only by Tanaji Malusre, but he commanded the Marathas who pursued and routed the flying foe after Afzul Khan was slain. We find him in command again before and during the siege of Panalla by Sidi Johur in 1660. During this siege it is related, in the account of Shahji and Shivaji found in Raigarh, that Shivaji and Nettare had a serious dispute owing to a punishment inflicted by the former on the brother of the latter's wife for being absent when an attack was meditated. The difference, however, must have been soon made up, for the following year Nettare was still in command of the Maratha cavalry, and ravaged the Mogul territory far and wide. "The whole

army under Nettaji Palkar, sarnobat, overran Palghat, Parande, Haveli, Kalburga, Newasa, Udgir, and all the country as far as the Godaverı, and exacted tribute. The sarnobat then fought a battle with the Subhedar of Aurungabad, who advanced against him with his army, killed him and many of his elephants and horses, and captured Aurungabad”¹ Two years later he commanded the Maratha army which opposed Shaısteh Khan’s advance to Poona. In 1666, when Shivaji went to Delhi, the forts that he did not surrender to the Moguls “were strengthened and left under the care of Moropant Peshwa, Nilopant Muzumdar, Nettaji Palkar, and the king’s mother”¹ In a word, all through the early years of the Maratha struggle for freedom, Nettaji was second to none among the followers of Shivaji. As the late Mr Justice Ranade says in his account of the rise of the Maratha power, “he was the most dashing officer in the army”, and was “here, there, and everywhere, wherever danger was to be faced”.

¹ Mankar’s *Life and Exploits of Shivaji*

RIES

NOTES

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9 Chauk is on the western side of the Ghauts, on the road between Poona and Bombay

Matheran, a hill about 2500 feet high, about 30 miles from Bombay. On the top of it there is now a health resort

luxuriant foliage. Matheran is said to mean the "wooded head". It is covered to the top with abundant woods

such as it was, it was not a good road, not much of a road

10 Bhima, a tributary of the Kistnah. It rises in the shrine of Bhama-Shankar, and, after a course of fully five hundred miles, joins the Kistnah north of Raichur

widen his empire, make it bigger by adding new lands to it

Samarkand, a famous city of Russian Central Asia, in the valley of Narafshan, said to have been destroyed by Alexander the Great, was the capital of the Tatar conqueror Timur

the ever-extending circle, the Mogul Empire was constantly adding new conquests, and therefore stretching out farther and farther

exposed to the oppression, open to have unjust demands made on it, and to have its people badly used by

11 claimed sovereignty, declared it was under their rule

an anticipation, &c, the hoping and waiting for a time when they would be better governed

Maharashtra (lit the great kingdom), the land of the Marathas

a prophecy was bandied, &c, a story of a prediction that the time when the country would be

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freed was at hand, was passed from one to another by word of mouth

assume the bearing, &c, look as if they felt they were freemen, and therefore the equals of any other men

monsoon, seasonal wind. In India there are two monsoons, the south west and the north-east

12 mysterious source of inspiration, wonderful and secret way the feeling had sprung into existence

pervaded the hearts, &c, was a feeling felt by all, high and low alike

belabouring, beating, thrashing

violence of his exertions, the efforts he was putting forth

vehemently applauded, showed she thought what he did was praiseworthy by marked signs of approval

champak blossoms, flowers of a tree bearing white and yellow flowers which are used in religious worship for decorating shrines in June

13 imaginative nature, fanciful disposition

the little virago, woman with spirit of a man, used as term of reproach at times, a bold, impudent vixen

14 in seemly fashion, in a proper or becoming way

stripling, a youth nearing manhood

down of manhood, &c, the coming moustache was making his upper lip look dark

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15 is not long to be delayed, will soon take place

celebrated with fitting pomp, that there may be enough of display and of feasting for the occasion

frequent attacks, &c, small companies of the Bijapur soldiers are often assaulted by the people

to enforce the payment, &c, compel the people to pay their taxes, and to frighten them into doing what they were ordered to do

overawe the disaffected, make those who disliked Bijapur rule afraid to show their dislike

retaliate on the inhabitants, treat the people cruelly in revenge

such affrays, quarrels of that kind

16 horse litter, a covered couch carried on horseback

for the occasion, to go as part of his sister's escort

17 beating a retreat, &c going back as quickly as they could

was blocked, was stopped, that there were soldiers across the road who would not let them go back

levelled their matchlocks, pointed their guns at them

a volley was fired, a number of the men shot at them

Further resistance, &c, it was no good to try not to do what they were told

overwhelming superiority, &c, vastly greater strength or number

18 advancement in the imperial army, being promoted to high place in the army, made an officer

accept the gifts of fortune, take gladly the good chance that offers

rough guise, looking like misfortune

insolent proposal, impudent thing to ask him to do

prevented them, &c, kept them from killing him, striking him dead

mullah, the officer whose duty it is to summon to prayers, and who usually conducts them

19 but swooned, only fainted

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whoever has his foe, &c, in other words, it is a man's duty to himself to show no mercy to an enemy—the doctrine of frightfulness

Shaikh Sadi, Persian poet, the country's greatest and most popular author His works include the *Bustan*, *Gulistan*, and *Diwan*

prudence dictates patience, common sense requires us to be careful before we do what can never be undone

20 Iain unconscious, Iain without knowing what was going on about him

bemoaning, &c, grieving over the bad luck he had met with

had befallen him, had happened to him

21 to escape the penalty, not to be put to death as a punishment

to have him secretly, &c, to get him carried off to a safe place during the night without anyone knowing about it

the most sacred shrines, the holiest places of worship

22 no temptation to visit it, they could get no plunder there, and their enemies could not get help from it

immediately leave his home, go away from the house at once

would be procured, &c, men would be got or hired to carry him

imperatively necessary, &c, that he must on no account let it be known that he was alive

After proceeding, &c, after going for six or seven miles up a gently inclined road

Jacob's Ladder, a very steep ascent, named with reference to the vision of Jacob at Bethel, who saw a ladder stretching from earth to heaven, and the angels ascending and descending on it

23 Matheran plateau Matheran has a flat top with an area of some eight square miles

so exhausted, &c, so worn out he could go no farther

applied to them, &c, asked them to help Netaji up the ladder

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24 A bier was constructed, they made a frame of wood on which he could be carried

circutious path, a roundabout road

primaeval forest, a forest that had been there from the very earliest times

25 convenient, comfortable, suitable

plinth, flat slab rising above the general level

monsoon, seasonal, the southwest monsoon, June to October

scantiest, &c, there was very little of it, and what there was was very rough

stood out prominently, swelled up so as to be clearly marked out along the arm or leg or across the chest

26 Holy Land, Palestine, a land to which the pious have been in the habit of making pilgrimages since the beginning of the Christian Era. These pilgrimages were especially numerous during the Middle Ages

St James at Compostella, Santiago de Compostella, the shrine of St James the Great, one of the most frequented shrines in Europe during the Middle Ages

Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction, the wife of Siva, usually painted black, and holding an exterminating sword in one hand and a human head in the other

Rameshwar (*Rameswaram*), a town in the Madura district of the Madras Presidency which contains one of the most noted temples in India. According to tradition it was founded by Rama himself to show his gratitude for his success in the war against Ravana, the demon king of Ceylon, who had carried off Sita, Rama's wife. For hundreds of years thousands of pilgrims from all parts of India have visited this shrine

abduction, &c, the way the Mahometans had carried off his sister by force and how nearly he had been killed

spiritual son, one whose mind and way of looking at things and judging of them had been formed by him

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27 relieve them, &c, enable them to feel less anxious about him

living rock, rock still forming part of the mountain, part of the earth

accompany his preceptor, go with his teacher

iron tinctured, the water contained dissolved in it a small quantity of iron oxide, which gave it a reddish tinge

28 embowered, made it look as if set in a grove

translucent atmosphere, exceedingly clear air

his soul intervening space, he was able in fancy to pass across to the dear ones at home and see what they were doing

Portuguese town of Bombay. Bombay was Portuguese till 1662, when it passed to Charles II as part of his wife's dowry. He sold it to the East India Company in 1668

29 Had Nettaji's life, &c, if Nettaji had known that his sister Ganga was well, and not been afraid to think of what might have become of her, he would have been very happy in his new life

delightful and exhilarating made life pleasant and vigorous and joyful

the love of action, &c, the wish to be doing something was mixed in him with the wish to know the meaning of things

physical education, instruction in how to use best and how to make better the powers of his body

30 Sandow and Maclaren, a modern teacher of physical culture and a noted cricketer

excelled the master, was better than his teacher

athletic exercises, competitions in bodily strength and skilful use of it, such as running, leaping, &c

31 anxious, &c, wishing to show how skilful and how strong he was

accomplish, &c, do what he had been set to do

apparently without &c, it did not seem that he put forth his strength

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- simultaneous attack, &c ,
against two or three enemies try
ing at one time to wound them
- 32 obedience is the truest rever-
ence, to do what he is bidden is
the pupil's surest sign of respect
for his teacher
easily parried, easily guarded
against
never succeeded, was unable
at any time to touch the hermit
flexible steel seemed, &c ,
wherever he struck the hermit's
sword seemed to be there between
the hermit and hurt
conviction of ignorance, the
feeling that we do not know
- 33 thoughtful side, reasoning
powers and powers of reflection
Rama, the hero of the *Rama*
yana, considered the seventh in
carnation of Vishnu
Bhima, the second of the five
sons of Pandu. He was the principal
general of the Pandava army, and
was renowned for his strength and
swiftness. The name means "Ter-
rible"
Arjuna the third of the five
sons of Pandu. He was taught
the use of the bow by Drōṇa, a
learned Brahman skilled in military
matters. He appeared at the ex-
hibition of arms at Hastinapura,
where he gave a marvellous dis-
play of archery and sword playing,
&c. At the Swayamvara of Drau-
padi he hit the golden fish, and
was acknowledged as victor by
Draupadi, who threw the garland
round his neck. Draupadi became
the wife of the five brothers
Yudhishthira was the eldest
of the Pandava brothers. He was
taught the use of the spear by
Drōṇa. He was, however, more
distinguished for wisdom and good-
ness than for warlike deeds
- 34 intervals of rest, &c , times
when he had not any particular
task to do, when he did no work
trances, periods when his soul
seemed separated from his body
and he took no notice of what was
happening round about him
- 35 glinted on the burnished
foliage, was reflected from the

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- polished surface of the leaves,
which shone as if it had been
rubbed bright
the shadow, &c , I feel that I
am dying
thy seclusion, &c , your hiding
place among the woods in the hill
country
- 36 hast acquired, hast gained
to defend the oppressed, to
protect those who are being ill-
used by people stronger than
themselves
Shiva (*Śiva*, *Śiva*), the third
person of the Hindu triad, the
destroyer. His worshippers are
called Saivas. According to them
Shiva is Time, Justice, Fire, Water,
the Sun, the Destroyer, the Cre-
ator
Maharashtra, the land of the
Marathas so called in the Parana
vouchsafed, allowed, permitted
incarnate God, the god become
flesh, having taken on human form
- 37 fugitive, one fleeing from ene-
mies
deluded into, &c , cheated into
believing him beaten
drives them to perdition, ut-
terly destroys them
immense concourse, huge
crowd of people gathered together
that consummates, &c , when
he has finished his task, set the
Marathas free
- 38 misty future, time to come in
which we don't know what may
happen
sit as conquerors, take their
place as victors. The Marathas
conquered the Mogul Empire
ponder, think carefully over
obedient, &c , doing as his
master bade him
conferred a priceless boon,
given a good gift not able to be
prized too highly
bond would be snapped,
the tie that bound them would be
unloosed
- 39 hardly conscious, &c , scarcely
aware of the existence of an out-
side world.
abstraction, absorption in
thought.

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uneasy about, &c, frightened
for the safety of

40 almost revered, &c, very
nearly worshipped him as a god
meditating, pondering or think
ing over matters

41 for what purpose, what object
they had in raising so high a heap
of stones

subject for glorification, a
thing to rejoice over

confers merit, makes seem
more worthy, is "ascribed for
righteousness

had been duly performed, had
been carefully and minutely at
tended to

to return to the world, &c,
to go back to live among men as
he had lived two years before

42 receive enlightenment, &c,
be shown clearly in a wonderful
and secret way what he was to do

fulfil his destiny, do the work
heaven intended him to do

beautiful asylum, lovely place
of rest and security,

dull of soul, of a lethargic,
stupid, or heavy nature

43 undergone in the interval,
gone through between that and
this

fiction of his death, &c, that
the pretence that he was dead
should still be made

revealing his disguise, making
it known who he was

for permission, &c, to be
allowed to take his night's rest
under the mango tree

44 readily accorded, freely granted
to promote the comfort, &c,
to make their visitor more happy
revealed himself, made himself
known,

Orion had passed the zenith,
it was past midnight

45 suspected, &c, thought, and
rightly thought, to be a friend
and supporter of Shivaji

destined saviour, he whom
fate has marked out for the de
liverer

the most important centre,
&c, the chief stronghold or seat

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of Mahometan power in the dis
trict

was threatened, &c, that the
enemy proposed to try to capture
remain inactive, stay still doing
nothing

46 embraced, &c, welcomed with
delight the first chance of doing
the work

immured, shut up in side walls,
confined in a prison

converted into a demon, turned
into an evil monster

47 His route, his road

disguised as a hermit, had the
dress and appearance of a hermit

The great spear, &c, people
would think he carried it for a
protection against wild beasts

48 retain the life, &c, if you wish
to be left alive

insolent cavalier, the proud
and insulting horseman

momentary tremor, &c, the
quiver of fear that passed over
him for an instant showed he was
not brave

blustering, boastful and over
bearing

plant your victorious stan
dard, having beaten your enemies,
set up your flag as a sign of victory

49 He too well appreciated, &c,
he knew what a help it was in the
fight to be mounted as he was on a
big horse,

beyond the reach, his opponent
could not strike him with his
sword

means of flight, &c, he could
run away if he was getting the
worst of it.

with the object, intending if
he could to free his horse's head
unchivalrous example, un
knightly act in trying to take
unfair advantage of an enemy

is disabled, is made unfit to use

50 you wish the kites, &c, you
wish me to kill you, and leave
your body for food to the birds
of prey

had not the face, had not the
impudence, boldness, and falseness
ramparts, fortifications

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direct our steps, tell us how we should go

51 usual dress, the clothes he wore were like the clothes worn by Marathi countrymen

being captured, being made prisoners of

involve going, &c, make it necessary for them to go

who appeared, &c, his bright eye and the liveliness of his expression made it seem that he was a clever fellow, a fellow who knew what he was about

52 follow the peasant's advice, do what the countryman stated should be done

recovering the horse, getting possession of the horse again

stipulating, making an agreement

attempt to escape, try to get off, to be free

resigned himself, &c, took it as a matter of course and a thing that could not be altered

53 admonitory pricks, warning prods with the point of the spear

challenged, called on to state who they were and why they had come

satisfied him, made him feel quite sure

carefully scanned, examined very closely

has retired for the night, has gone to his bedroom

54 weighty enough, of sufficient importance

to justify, &c, to make it right that I should rouse

make my way to his presence, &c, force a way for myself to him

had now appeared, had now come forward to take part in what was going on

overwhelmed the unfortunate, poured out a flood of oaths and abuse on the sentry

diverted to, turned from the sentry to the visitor

consternation, surprise and inability to decide what to do to meet the attack

55 good reason, the fortress was

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not in a condition to resist an attack

some operations, some military work

to man the ramparts, to place defenders along the walls

at his disposal, that he could use

had been dilatory, had put off doing what he should have done

56 awaited the approach, stood waiting for the coming up of the enemy

to flee with his daughter, to get away with Kashi to a place of safety before the enemy attacked the fortress

unexpectedly relieved, it did not seem likely that Shivaji would be able to gather men enough to drive off the besiegers

good evidence of, &c, shown that he was trustworthy and knew the mountain paths

cogency of Nettaji's arguments, the soundness and force of his reasoning

57 applauded his resolve, showed her approval of what he proposed to do

confirm the fancy, &c, to make stronger the liking he had for Kashi from his boyhood up

58 natural causeway, raised road formed by nature

bastions, fortifications, earth-works

little protection from art, help from fortifications against attack

splendid prospect, grand wide view

dorjon-keep, the central tower or keep, the strongest part of a Norman castle

59 dimly discerned, seen, but far from clearly

unexpectedly warm reception, such a volley from guns and muskets as they did not expect to get no indication, no sign

freedom from apprehension, that they did not at all fear an attack

the garrison was roused, the men in the fort were awakened to the danger

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60 in spite of the fatigue, although they were tired out with the long night march

practicable breach, &c, an opening would be made in the fortifications through which the enemy would be able to make their way

61 unmolested by the garrison, the soldiers in the fort did nothing to disturb or interfere with their cannonade

determined attack, a resolute attempt to force their way into the fort

chimpanzee, the largest and one of the strongest of the anthropoid apes, is found in tropical forest Africa

laid low, killed

62 Ravana, the ten-headed demon king of Ceylon, who abducted Sita, the wife of Rama

Kumbhakarana, the demon brother of Ravana, a monster who is reputed to have gone through the forests eating the nymphs of heaven, the *Apsarases*, the followers of Indra, the God of all, also the *rshis*, or sages, and men—a cannibal indeed of the most offensive kind

absorbed in admiration, so much taken up were they in watching the strength and skill of the fighters, that they stopped fighting themselves

63 insensate fury, rage amounting to madness

resume the offensive, become again the one who attacked

64 appalled them, frightened them so thoroughly

the far superior number, &c, there was a much greater number of attackers than of defenders

attenuated garrison, the number of defenders had been made very small by the withdrawal of a great part of the garrison

scale the precipices, climb the steep face of the rocks

obviously impossible, clearly could not be done

65 reasonably hope, expect on fairly sufficient grounds

Page

converted, &c, turned from a misfortune into an advantage

eventually relieved, at last freed from the besiegers

66 a high reputation, great fame, the name of being one of the bravest and most skilful of the Maratha soldiers

a heroic defender, a brave man who would die to further the interests of his country

effected without interruption, the enemy made no attack on them when they were retiring

consternation caused, dismay and terror and astonishment produced

67 undisputed possession, they held it and nobody tried to take it from them

prevent his disguise, hinder people from finding out that he was not what he seemed to be

about the hostile commander, about the general of the Bijapur army besieging the place (*Rajmachi*)

indignation at, &c, anger and scorn for the way he had been used.

68 however deficient, &c, no matter how cowardly he was

69 actual experience of, &c, knew as a matter of fact, from what he had seen, that he was a coward

70 march triumphantly, march with gladness, having been completely successful

get through, get past the camp and the lines of

he had sufficient sense, he had enough wit to keep him from telling a secret that might be helpful to the enemy

71 he concluded, he ended by saying

our orange standard, the Maratha flag Yellow, the ascetic colour, was chosen by Swaji for the colour of his flag on the advice of his guru Ramdas

without further delay, without putting off any more time

striking a good stroke, &c, defending himself to the best of his ability

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- endure that which is written, &c, bear what fate has decreed he must bear
- 72 dangerously exposed, &c, laying themselves open to being shot at or having weapons thrown at them
- making preparations, getting ready for supper
- to take the precaution, &c to do what prudence would have made them do
- fate is propitious to courage, fortune favours the brave
- unconcernedly, coolly, without any show of fear
- pitching their tents, putting up their shelters or tents
- pulaos, dishes of meat cooked with rice, raisins, and spices
- 73 engaged on urgent, &c, employed on a task that must be done at once
- without impediment, &c, without anybody stopping or interfering with him
- causeway, made road, or high way joining Matheran to the range of the Ghauts
- to all intents, &c, in every way as far as one could see
- manifestly exhausted, evidently utterly tired out
- prayed their oppressors, begged the Mahometans who treated them cruelly to have pity
- 74 desist from their cruelty, stop ill using the men
- goad them on, made them hurry up by pricking them on with spears as their drivers do oxen with goads
- 75 disposed to desert, willing to run away and not help
- 76 redoubtable warrior, a tried, skilful, and brave soldier
- after a moment's hesitation, after for a moment being unable to decide what to do
- valour is sometimes, &c, the best way to escape danger is to face it boldly
- discretion was the better, &c, wise avoidance of danger was the most real bravery

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- prevented, &c, kept from taking word to Shivaji of the siege of Rajmachi
- 77 encumbered by the weight, &c, unable to move freely on account of his heavy armour
- shaken off their pursuers, got quite away from those who were chasing them
- 78 roosting on, &c, passing the night resting on, said of birds
- announced the approach, showed that the day was just going to break
- in the neighbourhood of, &c, in the country round about Poona
- 79 a natural veranda, an unmade covered way standing out from the side of the mountain
- grotesque shape, whimsical, out of the common, and extravagant form
- great soldier, the Duke of Wellington
- Assaye and Argaum, two battles in which Wellington beat the Marathas
- interesting information, news that he was glad to get, that was important
- 80 due meed of praise, thanked him, and said he had done very well indeed in caring for the horse and giving it back to him
- a well-marked track, a foot path that could be easily seen and followed
- experience of horseflesh, knowledge of horses and of how to manage them
- allowed him much opportunity, &c, given him a decent chance of learning more about horses
- confinement to the stall, being shut up in the stable
- disconcerted, &c, put out and probably unseated
- 81 high mettle, fine spirit, great courage
- exulting in the pride, &c, being exceedingly glad because he was young and strong, and had high hopes
- Ptolemy, a famous geographer,

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flourished in Alexandria in the first half of second century

compassion for, &c, sympathy with and pity for those being ill treated

82 waylaid, pounced upon and captured by a company of thieves

a terrible blow, &c, hurt him very much

assailed him in his boyhood, when his sister's wedding party was attacked

dogged his footsteps, followed closely after him, that he was still unlucky

proceeded far, gone forward any great distance

gosain, an ascetic, one vowed to poverty

83 no great stature, he was not at all tall

mysterious magnetic attraction, something he could not account for made him like the young man

Ganpati (*Ganesa*), the son of Shiva and Parvati, the god of wisdom and master of the troops of demi gods who wait on Shiva

84 relieve her people, free them from being ill treated

Bhavanī (*Bhavadni*), the wife of Bhawa or Shiva

extraordinary revelation, wonderful knowledge granted him about hidden things

antecedents, who his forefathers were

endowed with supernatural, &c, had powers not common to men

with miraculous powers, could do things no mere man could do

85 inspired by some god, &c, had thoughts and feelings put into my heart by some divine being

for the liberties of, &c, to set free the Maratha people

allegiance, faithful obedience and service

half soliloquizing, &c, half thinking aloud, half questioning the gosain and Netaji

86 to provide them with arms, to get or buy weapons for them

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Kala to the Krishna, from the north to the south

extirpate, utterly destroy this company of thieves and murderers

87 desperate men, hopeless men who did not care what they did, thinking matters could not be made worse

88 of the insecurity, &c, it showed how little assured men could feel of enjoying the things they had worked for

captured charger, the horse taken from Ayub Khan

89 proceeding from a rock, coming from a man standing on the top of a rock

Resistance, &c, they could neither defend themselves nor escape

leader of their assailants the man who was in command of the robbers

avenge any wrong, punish severely anyone who harms

90 not destitute of humour, had a strong sense of fun, saw the amusing in things

On receiving, &c, on being answered, told

fine ransom, a great sum to be set free

repress his indignation, keep from showing how badly he thought of the proposal.

91 whom I intend to make, I have made up my mind to marry your daughter

stirring times, times of change and uncertainty, times of great movements

a mustard seed becomes, &c, a very small thing grows to a great size

Vikramaditya, a famous Hindu King of Malwa, who began to reign between fifty and sixty years before the Christian Era. Vikramaditya marks the beginning of an era still in use in Hindustan. He was the most celebrated monarch of his time, a model of unselfishness and self restraint

Udepur The Maharanas of Mewar or Udepur are the highest

Page

in rank among the Rajput chiefs claiming descent from Kusa, the elder son of Rama

Shahji, the father of Shivaji
the high gods, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva

sardonic grin, a smile or at tempt at smile that was bitterly ill natured

92 bruited abroad, &c, noised or talked of all over the land

terrible strait, &c, dreadfully difficult position in which she was
words of abhorrence, words showing her dislike, her hatred and loathing

devote his life, &c, give all his powers of mind and body to freeing Maharashtra.

from the yoke of Bijapur, from the enforced obedience to Bijapur rulers

93 not my equal in stature, &c, not so tall or strong or brave as I am

Perish the thought! never let anyone fancy this

robber chieftain of Bhaja, Venkat Wagh

Lohogad (*Lohogarh*), a fortress near Poona

throw away my trump, give up for nothing what is likely to be most useful to me

94 out of your chief's liberality, out of what your chief will be willing to give you as a reward

silently nodded assent, nodded, without speaking, to show that he agreed

advantage himself, do also something that would benefit himself

to regain their freedom, to get away from the robbers

95 to disengage his hands, &c, to free his hands of their bonds

a place of concealment, a place where he could hide

he did not venture, &c, he did not dare to come out

escorted by the band of robbers, the company of thieves went with them, keeping them prisoners

Buddhist caves, Buddhism

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spread at one time all over India, the Buddhist era is reckoned from the death of Buddha, 543 B C

96 to fall into their power, to get taken prisoner by them

nave, the part of a Christian church stretching lengthwise from the entrance, and having on each side of it the aisles

relics, things that brought to mind some especial saint, that were more particularly associated with such a one

97 Cups of the same beverage, cups of hot milk sweetened with sugar

accommodated with cushions, &c, had cushions put down, for them to sit upon, to the right of the robber

with as much courtesy, &c, in as civil and kindly a way as was possible for a man like him

provided with a private apartment, have a room given over to themselves

with all due honour, with every mark of respect

chapatties, thin flat unleavened cakes made of flour and water

with abhorrence, with dislike and disgust, mixed with repulsion

tyranny of caste, oppressive rules they had to follow in obedience to their caste rules

98 To this category, &c Venkat Wagh, the robber chief, was one of those who acted in this way

offer him obeisance, bow down before him in reverence

who had connived at his escape, who had made it possible for Rama to get free by shutting his eyes to what he saw him doing

absolutely silent, made no sign or sound to show he saw them

absorbed in deep meditation, entirely taken up with his thoughts about important things

a despiser of the gods, one who does not obey or worship the gods, an unbeliever

sacrilegiously stole, impiously carried away, without right, holy things

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99 hour of vengeance, the time fixed for their punishment

unfaithful to our salt, betray those who feed us

the poor devotee, &c, the poor man who had given himself up entirely to the service of the gods

fill to the brim, &c, do the wickedest thing even he has ever done in his evil life

would not budge, would not move from where he was

100 the favoured servant, the worshipper whom the god Ganpati thinks most highly of

inclined to take him, &c, looked as if he would kill Gopal

used to deeds of violence, accustomed to wounding and killing and robbing

A murmur of indignation, a low sound that showed their anger and disgust

could not venture to, durst not act without taking it into account

in undisturbed possession, &c, keeping the place from which he could take note of everything that happened

did not neglect his opportunities, made the most of the chance thus given him

101 skilful appeals, &c, skilful arguments in favour of deserting the robber, arguments suited to the characters of the men spoken to, saying to patriots that it was for their country and their religion, and to the greedy and worldly that they would make more by going over to Shivaji's side

had great weight, caused those to whom they were addressed to think carefully over matters

did not try to seduce, did not attempt to win over to Shivaji

102 had resumed his potatoes, had begun again to drink deeply of intoxicating drink

the meridian, mid day, when the sun is overhead, due north, or due south of the place

roused by a messenger, awakened by one who brought news

brains partially cleared, no

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longer stupid with drink, but able partly to understand the meaning of what was going on

barricaded with the stems, fortified with branches and trunks of trees

103 doubt the devotion, question whether they were faithful or not

104 expose the lady, &c, place her where there was a likelihood of her being seen, and a chance of her being killed

with indignation, with great anger

105 go unmolested, &c, go where you like without harm or hindrance

give up our captives, hand over those we have taken prisoners

affianced bride, promised wife

consented to our betrothal, agreed to accept me as a son-in-law

backshish, a present or suitable reward

106 received from his messenger, was told by the man he had sent.

to the missiles, &c, to the arrows or shot

exposed unprotected, &c, they would be without protection from the fire of the enemy

107 to make the attack, &c, to try to capture the cave at once

carefully concealing, &c, taking care not to let the enemy see where they were going

from the north and the south respectively, one part from the north and another from the south

main central, &c, the chief body, which was attacking from the front.

nefarious threat, horrible and unlawful threat

108 with the agility, &c, as nimbly as monkeys could have climbed.

brandished, &c, shook or flourished round a heavy axe

resolute attack, attack pressed to the utmost, that refused to be driven back

retire to the interior, &c, draw back to the inside of the cave

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109 more religious or more timid,
of those who thought more of what
the gods required them to do or
of those more easily frightened

He defended the entrance, &c ,
he kept the enemy from coming in
on the right

showing her his prowess, show-
ing her how brave he was

Two of the boldest, &c , he had
lulled two of the bravest of those
attacking

perilous in the extreme, &c ,
was one of very great danger

110 parried it, warded off the
stroke, defended himself against
the stroke

occupied with his other, &c ,
taken up with the others who were
trying to kill him

111 made no more resistance,
tried no longer to keep up the
fight.

grovelled, &c , threw themselves
flat on the ground, praying for
mercy

transferred their allegiance,
&c , swore to be faithful followers
of Shivaji

the lion's share, &c , the larger
part of what they had stolen

distributed among, &c , he
divided among those who had just
joined him

112 dangers to which they had
been exposed, risks they had had
to meet

to their deliverers, those who
had set them free

palanquin, a covered chair
carried by means of poles on the
shoulders of men

Lohogad (? *Lohogarh*), fort in
the Poona district, about four
miles west of Khandala

disposition of their forces,
where the men were to be placed
to meet the attack

Hanuman, from Hanuman
the god of the wind, and chief
general of Sugriwa the monkey
king who aided Rama in his war
with Rawana to recover Sita

113. on the state of affairs, on how
matters were going

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jogi (*yogi*), a name used for any
ascetic, properly a follower of the
Yoga philosophy

Mawulis (*Mavalis* or *Mavias*),
the name given to Shivaji's foot
soldiers, a wild tribe living in the
valleys round Poona

avail against, be worth as
weapons when used against

that dominate that overlook
and control, lord it over

114 prophetic visions, dream pic-
tures of the future

thy regard, your care and liking
the consciousness, &c , the
feeling in my heart that I am
acting rightly

United with her, married to her

115 loyally, with the utmost truth
and singleness of aim

to regard the performance,
&c , to think if I strove to do
right, I would be rich, or power-
ful, or happy

to promote, to help to bring
about

for Nettaji's exertions, &c ,
for what Nettaji had done to de-
liver them

betrothed, solemnly and pub-
licly pledged

116 presentiment, a feeling of evil
about to happen, before the thing
takes place

impious blasphemer, wicked
irreverent abuser of holy things

Indrayani, a feeder of the
Bhuma

117 which enviously denied them,
&c , hid from their sight as if from
spite

their souls, &c , in fancy they
crossed the mountain barrier and
saw again the well remembered
scenes of their childhood

tender sympathy, &c , her lov-
ing understanding and gladness in
their joy

in accordance with, &c , in
obedience to the commands of
Shiva's wife Bhawani

118 to operate against, to make
war upon

convoys of treasure, money
sent from Kulyan to Bijapur

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and guarded by a strong body of troops

wonderfully sure-footed, as astonishingly difficult to make stumble

inspected the defences saw that everything was in order to repel attacks

119 Torna, a fort in Bhor, in the Satara district of the Bombay Presidency

request an audience, begged to be received and to get a hearing

120 repairing the fortifications, mending the walls, &c

hewing the solid rock, cutting the rock to get proper stones out of it

impregnable, not able to be taken by an enemy

ruined battlements, fortifications that had fallen into disrepair

working for their daily, &c, who have to live by what they earn and buy food also for their families

121 my treasure-chest, &c, I have no money to pay the men with

restoration, liberation, deliverance from foreign rule

122 by selling the manufactures, &c, by exchanging European goods for Indian

a valuable consignment, &c, a parcel of goods of great worth sent to us to sell for the owners

Toledo, a Spanish town noted for centuries for its sword blades

Thana, a prettily situated town on the west shore of Salsette Creek It became tributary to the Portuguese about 1529 The fort and the Portuguese cathedral still show its former importance

123 Junnar, between fifty and sixty miles north of Poona, was surprised and plundered by Shivaji in 1657

concluded a bargain, come to a final agreement about price

achieve the great destiny, &c, do the great things people say you are bound to do

124 much excited, greatly disturbed or moved

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controlled his emotion, did not show how strongly he felt

mental agitation, with mind greatly disturbed, his thoughts beyond his control

125 seems a desperate one, seemed a plan that could not be carried out

desperate diseases, &c, in cases of life or death great risks must be run

at the gloomy prospect, at the thought of the miseries that seemed about to befall them

confusedly intermingled, mixed so that one could not tell which was the waking thought and which the dream

126 resplendent with, &c, overpoweringly bright with jewels.

depth of his soul, his inmost and most secret thoughts

to be associated, to be joined with Shivaji as a friend

127 an illusion, a mere deceitful appearance

having finished his devotions, having finished his prayers and worship

128 following her directions, doing what she told us to do

accompany him to the shrine, going with him to the holy place

129 considered a good omen, thought to be a hopeful sign

blasted, blew up with an explosive

metallic clink, noise made by metals when struck

130 attached to the ring, fastened or tied to the ring

disclosed a small chamber, showed a small room

to be taken unopened, to be carried as they were with lids closed

private chamber, the room reserved for his own use

filled to the brim, completely filled

rupee, a coin worth 1s 4d, formerly worth 2s

mohur, a gold coin worth nominally fifteen rupees

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131 nobler feelings, the feelings of patriots who saw in the treasure the means of freeing their native land

skilled in determining, &c, used to valuing or calculating the worth of precious stones

intended for, &c, meant to give as a present to the wife for whom he cared most

132 jotting down, writing down various items, the different things contained in the boxes

a lakh = one hundred thousand rupees = £10,000 sterling

dismissed the jeweller, sent the jeweller away

summoned the Portuguese, &c, ordered them to bring into his presence the Portuguese merchant

133 required more weapons, needed more swords and guns

burning with ardour, full of the strongest desire, the most patriotic zeal

equipped with, &c, fitted for fighting by having given to them the arms just bought

134 moderate their pace, go more slowly

far from being an expert horseman, he was a very poor rider

tremendous precipices parts where the mountain sank down precipitously, and sank down, too, to a great distance, causing those who looked on them to tremble

gave him an opportunity &c, enabled him to rest without they themselves stopping

135 charmed the old people, won the admiration and liking of Netaji's parents

eager to take part, anxious to do what they individually could for the freeing of Maharashtra

escorted by a considerable train, accompanied and guarded by a large band

136 Highland fiery cross, the cross with which the chiefs in the Highlands of Scotland used to call together the members of their clan

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when they wished to make war on or repel an attack by outsiders

courage and devotion, bravery and steadfastness or faithfulness

passionate devotion, intense unshrinking readiness to sacrifice everything for him

137 bargains, troopers whose horses were supplied by the state, especially Maratha horsemen

rendezvous, arranged on meeting place

138 had stored, had housed for safe keeping

long-protracted haggling, a long time spent in trying to beat down the price, to bargain

exaggerating, &c, representing the arms as worth more than they actually were

139 depended on the purchase &c, could only be carried out if Shivaji managed to get possession of the arms

eventually persuaded &c, led at long last to take in exchange

Jesuits, Augustines, Capuchins, Dominicans The names of certain Roman Catholic monkish orders, all except Capuchins (*Corvils*) taken from name of their founders

inspected the workshops, &c, examined where the furniture was made, and the inlaying in the teak of ivory was carried on

140 signs of wealth, &c, things that showed that the people living there were well off, and did not fear that their goods would be taken from them

assigned to their reception, set aside by the authorities for Shivaji, &c, to stay in

vengeance of Heaven, the punishment heaven exacts from wrongdoers

wantonly, without provocation, without just cause

Such considerations, thoughts of that kind would not have hindered me if the goddess had put it in my head to attack

Any means are sanctified, whatever act helps to make the country free is a holy act

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141 could not be served, that no purpose could justify breaking the moral law

power based, &c, dominion got by wrongdoing could not last

would not save, &c, would not keep these states from being overthrown

Ramdas, the companion and teacher of Shivaji His Dasbooh, a work on religious duty, is a classic

all laws human and divine, would observe no law if it prevented his freeing his country

142 respect thy scruples, will take care not to ask you to do things you do not consider right

I will take the burden, &c, I will do them, and so if necessary bear the punishment

conveyed across the creek, taken over the channel between Salsette Island and the mainland.

short stature, not tall, below the middle height

calves, muscles at back of lower part of leg

143 wildest expressions, great shouts of gladness and other tokens of pleasure

to do him obeisance, to mark their respect and obedience by their attitude, to show by their manner that they took him for lord and master

blazoned far and wide, told all over the neighbouring country

above and below the Ghauts, on the Deccan and in the Konkan, on the plateau and on the sea coast strip

on the other side, on the east or mainland side of Salsette Creek

144 Fort Persik, &c, the *Ulhas*, which flows past Kalyan, enters the sea, or rather Salsette Creek, almost opposite Thana

threatened, looked as if it were to be attacked

Abaji Sondev (*Abaji Sondeo*), the commander of Shivaji's forces, surprised Kalyan, and took the governor prisoner, in 1648

intercepting the communications, prevent them sending in

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structions or supplies from the one to the other

145 plundering excursions, sent here and there bodies to rob the people, to make them join up against Bijapur

left bank, the north bank.

unperceived by the garrison, without the Bijapur garrison knowing that they had done so

146 information, &c, news as to what the enemy was doing

jumped to the conclusion, at once formed the opinion

Bava Malang (*Barva Malang*), Malangarh, a hill fortress in the Kalyan Taluka of Bombay

must start in pursuit, &c, must go in chase of them at once,

direction indicated, the way it was thought the convoy had gone

147 in sight of their quarry, in sight of the convoy, which they were pursuing as a wild beast pursues its prey

quicken their pace, hurried on more speedily

clattered through, rode hurriedly through, making a considerable noise

close on the traces, hard on the heels of

greet his parents, meet his father and mother and wish them well

thought it expedient, thought it safe to fight

as prudent, &c, as careful as he was daring

148 gaining a glorious victory, winning a battle and being greatly praised

inferior numbers, a less numerous body of soldiers

determined to abstain, &c, made up his mind not to engage the foe

delay their progress, keep them from going forward.

make feints, &c, look as if they were about to attack and stay enemy by making him prepare to meet attack

diminish their rate &c, make them go forward more slowly

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149 pressed on, hurried on fast as they could

devised more effectual, &c, had planned a better way to stop them

block up the road, make it impossible for the convoy to go along till they had removed the obstructions

150 called upon the inhabitants, ordered the villagers to help in closing the pass

the champion of their, &c, the man who was fighting for their religion and for their freedom

had scarcely been constructed, they had just finished building a strong fortification from trees and rocks

separated, &c, with only a short distance between them and those who were chasing them

their farther progress, &c, that they could go no farther on account of the closing of the pass

151 to turn, &c, to attack and drive away those who were following them

too wary, too skilful and careful to await, to let the enemy attack him

did not venture, did not dare to go far after them

their mules, the beasts that were carrying the treasure

the helpless position, that they were caught in a trap and could not do anything worth while to defend themselves or free themselves

all the waverers, all those who were in doubt as to what they should do

152 to man the barricade, to defend the hastily-thrown up fortifications in the pass

to arrange a meeting, to draw up conditions on which the leaders might with safety talk over matters

in the interval, midway between the Mahometan and Hindu forces

hurling words of contempt, using expressions that showed how meanly he thought of Nettare

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a truce to such folly, let there be an end for the time to such silly stupid talk

153 court defeat, seek to be beaten conference, a meeting to talk over matters and see what is best to be done

warring with words, doing battle with your tongue

conveying a considerable, &c, guarding on its way a large sum of money

exposing yourselves, &c, bringing down on yourselves the anger and vengeance

wrest from us, take from us by force

Nettare's soul, &c, Nettare got very, very angry

154 foul act, &c, disgraceful deed, betraying the Marathas

We are no robbers, we are soldiers, followers of Shivaji, not robbers

none have yet succeeded, no one has yet been able to kill me

let us arrange a combat let us agree on the conditions for a fight

chafing at the necessity, feeling vexed and annoyed that he was forced by his duty to draw back when the enemy attacked

readily embraced, gladly accepted the chance of fighting

the combat, &c, the battle itself and the preparations for it

155 should appear, &c, until Shivaji came up with the infantry

for his own purposes, because he thought it would be an advantage to him

hardly afforded room, was not wide enough for a fight on horse back

so obstinately, with such firmness and determination

do themselves justice, to act as well as they really could

returned to, &c, went back each to his own men

rejoiced at the chance, were glad at being able to meet and fight their foes

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156 hard to select, difficult to pick out the five best fighters

not to risk, &c, not to be one of the five fighters on the Maratha side

gave him the privilege, gave him the right in which he rejoiced popular voice, choice by the general body of the men

less fortunate, not so lucky, as they had not been chosen to fight the Mahometans

condemned to stand, &c, they were forced to look on when they would have preferred to fight

157 "Din, din, Mahomet!" "Al-laho Akbar!" Faith, faith, Mahomet! God is great! Mahommedan war cries

treacherous purpose, the deceitful, faith breaking action was understood

to extricate themselves, to get themselves free

violence of his indignation, &c, his angry contempt and dislike for such mean conduct put him into a furious rage

inspired by the goddess, have his mind and heart filled with thoughts by Bhavani

hewing down, killing with his sword

158. superior numbers, &c, the fact that there were more of them and that they had been more thoroughly drilled

might have prevailed, might have won the battle for them

an unpleasant surprise, a thing they did not expect, and that was unfavourable to them

159 whose approach, &c, no one had seen him coming up

were absorbed were utterly taken up with

subsequent mêlée, later general battle

unconditional surrender, laying down their arms and trusting to the mercy of the victors

tremendous exertions, efforts beyond ordinary powers.

put forth more, &c, he had done more than he could have done in cold blood.

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showed the clemency, gave an example of the mercy the avoidance of unnecessary cruelty

160 deprived of their arms, had their weapons and horses taken from them

this newly-acquired treasure, the wealth they had just gained

161 established communication, sent word to and got answers from

most intelligent, cleverest men, the men who thought and understood most.

Portuguese deserter, a Portuguese soldier who had left the army of Bijapur, in which he had enlisted, and joined the Marathas

162 that defended, &c, that guarded the fortifications

Hiwen Tshang (*Hsuen Tsang*, *Hsüan Tsang*), a Chinese Buddhist traveller who, in the middle of the seventh century, visited India, and at the request of the Emperor, T'ai Tsung, wrote out a detailed narrative of his travels, and translated into Chinese the Buddhist books he had brought from India

on the eastern, on the left or southern bank, as the river here flows from east to west.

Shenale Lake, about a quarter of a mile to the east of the town. From this lake the town gets its water supply

richly wooded, the district is in a region of heavy rains, therefore the country is well wooded

163 Kone, on the right or north bank of the river, is joined to Kalyan by a ferry

were guarded, &c, were not protected so carefully

considerable interval, a good long time

164 had anticipated, expected would be the result.

sufficient distance, far enough off not to be seen

collected for the purpose, brought together there to take the men over

blazing exactly overhead, at noon. The sun in May is right overhead at Kalyan

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165 refuge, shade shelter from the strong sun heat

lulled into false security, made to believe in a freedom from attack that did not exist

immunity from attack, that the enemy never assaulted that side of the town

roused from their torpor, wakened from the half sleepy, half conscious state into which they had sunk

driving some of the garrison, &c, part of the soldiers he forced back into the citadel, others he cut off and forced to yield

refused to surrender, would not yield, would not submit

166 the artillery duel, the fight between the guns on one side and the guns on the other

conditions more favourable, more likely to help the Marathas to get what they wanted

a practicable breach, &c, an opening through which an attack could be made

offered favourable terms, conditions of surrender they could accept with safety and honour

167 most proficient, &c, who were the best swordsmen and horsemen

practical exemplification, shown what use could be made of the exercise in actual warfare

168 without being compelled, &c They were not forced to bear the attack of heavier armed soldiers

corps of musketeers, a body of soldiers who were supplied with guns

pansupari, slices of areca nut, with chunam (*quacklime*), spices, and sometimes catechu, rolled up in betel nut leaf It is always presented to visitors on occasions of ceremony

169 wished to see him, wished to tell him something very important

had succeeded, had managed to get through without being caught

attacked by a violent fever, he became very ill with fever

reduced to desperate straits, had been almost forced to yield.

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170 the position of affairs, the state of the garrison at Shrivardhan

hold out as long, &c, only be forced by hunger to yield to the enemy

unable to check &c We can not hinder the enemy from pushing forward this mine, till it reaches the fortifications

encompasses us, lies round about us, surrounds us

171 the perilous nature, &c, that those who tried to relieve the place ran great risks

only refrained, &c, kept him self with difficulty from offering his services

more experienced leader, a leader who had taken part in a greater number of relief expeditions

perilous and important, &c risky undertaking, and one on which so much depended

172 the key of the Door, &c, who ever held the fort of Shrivardhan was able when it suited him to invade or leave the Konkan, in other words, to control it—the Door is a name for Bhorghat Pass

utmost expedition, the most rapid preparations and advance

difficulties of the enterprise, the obstacles to be overcome before Shrivardhan was safe would be twice as many

173 did not let the grass, &c, wasted no time, hurried up matters

gain admittance, manage to make your way into

174 every moment, &c, not a moment must be lost if we wish to succeed

intention, our plan of attacking Rajmachi

175 true as steel, to be trusted to the death

traitorous spies, the pretended friends in the service and pay really of the enemy

who had preceded them, gone on the way before them

176 quickened their pace, rode on faster than they had been doing

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they were no better mounted, &c, that they could not overtake those in front

gaining rapidly, quickly lessening the distance between it and those in front.

to confirm his suspicions, &c, to make certain that the men were traitors

177 if he could keep, &c, if he could prevent his horse from coming down in going over the rough ground

he gained upon them, &c, he made the distance between him and them steadily less

determined, &c, resolved to make Nettareji unable to follow them

calmly awaited their attack, stood ready without fear to meet them

178 by the impetus, the forward driving force of the speed got up in the charge

made short work, killed almost instantly

his heart failed him, he lost his courage was afraid to do as he had intended

179 confessed his treachery, acknowledged that he was on his way to tell the enemy of their plans

bribed by a citizen given money by one of the merchants of Kalyan to do what he had tried to do

to be devoted, &c, to be a faithful supporter of Shrivaji.

imminent danger, risk that threatened to make useless their efforts, by letting the enemy know what they were doing

180 well assured, quite certain he was trustworthy

concealed, &c, hidden in the centre of the bundle

liberal prices, more than usually large prices

tempted the peasantry, &c, led the country people to do what they knew to be wrong, showing how much they would gain by acting so

181 dismissed the attendants, sent the servants back home

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In this guise, with loads of grass on their backs

readily admitted, let in almost at once and without questioning

in charge of the commissariat, whose duty it was to supply food to the troops

asked permission, &c, asked to be allowed

182 was quite deserted, there was no one there but themselves

apparently doomed, &c, the defenders of Shrivardhan, who clearly must yield

an improbable event, something not at all likely to happen

firmly attached, fixed firmly, tied so that it would not unloose

concealed themselves, hid themselves

arrived in the neighbourhood, had come up quite close to Raymachi

183 take up a position, to hold themselves ready at a place

the twilight, &c, the short interval in tropical countries between sunset and darkening

peered anxiously looked closely and with great anxiety

from accomplishing, from doing the hard thing asked of him.

some change, &c, they would have to try some other way

184 an interval of, &c, the rope was twenty feet too short.

plans appeared &c, it seemed as if all his plans had failed.

sheer rock, the perpendicular rock—running right up and down

185 four human rungs, the four men up which the others could climb are like rungs in the ladder. The cross pieces, on which people step on a ladder, are called rungs, and rise one above the other

insuperable difficulty, an obstacle not to be got over

prepared for the ascent, made ready to climb the rope.

concerted action, for the garrison of Shrivardhan and the men who had climbed the precipice and the men waiting near the eastern gate to do what they had agreed to do

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186 hoping against hope, trusting though he had little reason to do so

was otherwise doomed, if not relieved would have to yield to the enemy

rushed out impetuously, dashed forth with the greatest eagerness and pleasure

were soon overpowered, were soon beaten by the larger forces against them

hurriedly arming, &c, hastily putting on their armour and getting their weapons to be ready for the fight

want of leadership, want of anyone in command

187 ineffectual resistance, opposition that did not count for much

in danger of being overwhelmed, under the risk seemingly of being completely beaten by their much more numerous enemies

retreated uphill, drew back up the hill

exactly reversed, had become just the opposite of what it had been

188 direct assault, a straightforward attack in force

repulsed with loss, driven back and many of them killed

commanding the approach, overlooking the way leading to the gate, and so able to prevent any one from going safely along it

was completed, had been finished

189 surrender immediately, submit at once

so elated at, &c, so delighted and proud at beating back the Marathas

190 undisputed possession, &c, there was no one left in the northern Konkan to contest his claim or refuse to obey him

Rajgad (*Rangarh* = the royal fort) It was regarded last century as one of the greatest strongholds of India. From its position and natural surroundings it must have long been an important fortress. It fell into the hands of

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Shivaji in 1648, and fourteen years later he made it his capital

refrained from, &c, made no more attacks on the Bijapur forces entered into negotiations, &c, tried to arrange terms with the Emperor of Delhi

exert pressure, &c, force by threats or promises to free Shivaji

191 organizing his power arranging for the better government and for the defence of the country under his rule

intriguing, &c, trying to come to some arrangement with

great enterprise the deliverance of the Marathas from foreign rule

mustered, &c, replied to their names when Shivaji's officers called the roll, assembled or gathered together

to make common cause, &c, to fight for the same purpose

unswerving fidelity, allegiance or faithfulness that could not be turned aside

192 domestic happiness, home comfort and pleasure

opportunity offered, a chance turned up

prefer her own happiness, put her own comfort in a higher place

obeyed the summons, &c, went at once

an English royalist poet, Richard Lovelace, born at Woolwich, 1618, died in London, 1658

193 "a new mistress", &c What I seek for now with all my heart is the enemy, and what I delight in having is the means of war, a sword, a horse, &c

"I could not love thee", &c. This is one of the commonest quotations in the English language, and means that only the love of an honourable and upright man is worth having, and that only honourable men can love as a man should

sorrowful at his departure, grieved by his going away

appreciated the sentiment, valued at its true worth, the expression of emotion

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- as successful in peaceful negotiation, get what he wanted by quiet talk and reasoning as suely as he had done so by fighting
- 195 sinister visage, scowling, evil, threatening face
- emissary, a person sent to act as the agent or representative of another
- an opportunity, a chance of talking to the raja by himself
- without his request, they did not tell him that the raja would not meet him
- Mahabaleshwar, the chief sanatorium of the Bombay Presidency
- 196 are insensible, do not feel, are not aware of
- gaze with rapture, look with intense delight
- Savitri, a south west-flowing river falling into the sea at Fort Victoria
- 197 loving partiality, a liking for the scenes of his childhood which made him judge unfairly
- interval of inaction, time when he no longer carried on the war
- earned the gratitude, made the country people think of him as a benefactor
- 198 alpenstock, a stick used to help the climber on mountains
- to enjoy the varying panorama, to take pleasure in the ever changing views that appeared to him as he wandered
- unwonted violence, the unusual exertion he had made
- in imminent danger, is threatened almost immediately
- 199 enquired Nettaji, Nettaji asked
- Par Pass = Parghat Pass
- 200 ascending the pass, climbing up the pass
- misinformed, told what is false
- Mahad, a town on the right or north bank of the Svriti, not far from Raigarh, Shivaji's capital
- exposing themselves, &c, letting the men in ambush see them
- tried to comfort, did what he could to console

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- 201 refused to be comforted, would not stop crying
- distracted her attention drew her thoughts from her injuries to the button he offered
- nervous apprehension, afraid they would be found out
- 202 destined liberator, the man sent by fate to free their countrymen
- incarnation &c, a god in the form of a man Incarnation is the name given to the assumption by a soul or spirit of a form or body
- could carry out his intention, could do what he proposed to do
- hither and thither, one in one direction and another in another
- 203 hurried by no hand, &c, no mortal man, but an offended god, had thrown the spear that killed Baj Shamraj
- issued from the wood, &c, came out to welcome Shivaji
- so opportunely, just at the right moment
- an adherent, &c, one who had the same aims and wished success to the national party
- inducing the raja, &c, winning the raja over to the side of Shivaji
- extremely suspicious, had very strong doubts about
- an unscrupulous hireling, one who would do any kind of work for another if paid for doing it
- immediately divulge, make known to him at once
- 204 chosen for their bad characters, picked out because they were evil unprincipled men
- the engagement, the promise he had made
- 205 base treachery, wicked and mean attempt to hurt one to whom he posed as a friend
- diplomatic deceit, sayings and doings intended to cheat the persons with whom the diplomatist is dealing
- courtly dissimulation, the lying and deceitful means used by courtiers to make others think wrongly about the matters in hand
- 206 require his services, need Shivaji for other work.

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an escort for his successor, a guard for the Brahmin who had taken his place

marvellous tales, wonderful and incredible stories

supernatural aid, &c, the help sent by the gods by which Shivaji was saved from his foes

207 to atone, &c, to make up for his non success and to punish those who killed him

The liberal supply, he had plenty of money

the connivance, the winking at, shutting their eyes to

desperadoes, ruffians prepared to do any evil deed

to carry it, &c, to do it, to kill or seize Nettaji

Wai, on the Kistnah, a sacred place with a large Brahman population, was in 1648 the headquarters of a Bijapur force, and passed into the hands of the Marathas in 1659. In the neighbouring village of Lahore are some interesting Buddhist caves

208 dogged his steps, followed him closely

seized their opportunity, took the chance they now saw and seized him

unfrequented paths, roads seldom used

witnessed the attack, saw him being captured

209 an insoluble mystery, a strange occurrence, for which no reason or account could be given

ascertained, found out

Satara, near where the Vena joins the Kistnah, is the headquarters of the District of the same name. The District is famous in Maratha history

might recognize him, should know who he was

flat-topped hill. These are very common in the Deccan. Satara is 2320 feet above sea level, so that the hill is over 3000 feet up

entirely cut off, he held no communication with the outside world

in anticipation, he had planned the murder and made preparations

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to profit by it, gathering troops at Mahabaleshwar

210 To secure his possession, &c, to make Javli safely his

one of the most dramatic incidents, Shivaji's murder of Afzal Khan, whom he had decoyed to a personal interview by a pretended submission

condemned to inaction, kept in a position where he could do nothing for his country

211 correspondingly cooler, &c, roughly, it may be said that the temperature grows less as we rise above sea level, the decrease being 1° F for every 300 feet rise

yielding to despair, giving up all hope of escape

indulgent treatment, kindly way in which they dealt with him

seduction of Nettaji, &c, the leading of Nettaji to betray Shivaji and the Maratha cause

rewarded its feudatories, repaid the sub rulers for their services

to obtain as much information, to learn all that he could

212 a brilliant conversationalist, one whose talk was very interesting

less irksome, less wearisome or tiring

reveal his intentions, make known to Nettaji what he wished him to do

rejected the proposal, would not hear of doing as they asked him to do

the oppressors of my country, the Baijapur Mahometans, who tyrannized over the Marathas

suave politeness, gentle and ceremonious care not to offend

approaches you stealthily, &c, when you feel death coming on you and can do nothing to save yourself

213 The terrible import, the horrible things the commandant meant

in descending unexpectedly, in going down without being prepared to do so

214 you shall abide, you shall remain, shall live

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gracious offers, the kind things
the king promises if you obey

cannot quell, cannot bring
under or subdue

inspired by fatalism, put into
the mind by the belief that every
thing that happens, happens of
necessity, being fated to happen

consciousness of doing, &c,
he was sure that what he did he
ought to do

'If it is written on my fore-
head' If before I was sent into
the world, it was decreed that this
should happen to me, to die for
my country

215 stoical resignation, taking
whatever happened without show-
ing either gladness or grief

to purchase, &c, to secure his
safety and freedom

disobedience to the gods,
doing what the gods ordered him
not to do

216 visions, &c, he had clearer
fancies of the goddess telling him
she would help

succeed the commandant, he
was to take the others place as
commandant

217 necessity of enquiring, &c,
the need for finding out how some
local troubles had arisen

gazing wistfully, looking with
longing eyes

aperture, &c, the opening into
the dungeon

218 sympathize, have a fellow-
feeling with a person

base act, &c, low, contemptible,
cruel, and treacherous deed

Her mind was oppressed, she
could not forget the cruel fate
prepared for the prisoner

alleviate his misery, make his
sufferings less

fascination, bewitching power,
power she could not control

increase her depression, put
her still more out of spirits

219 sit with our hands folded, be
passive, make no effort to help

utter dejection, as if she had
completely lost her spirits

trespassing beyond the limits,

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doing anything more than it was
thought fitting a woman should do

indignation at cruelty, dislike
and contempt for those needlessly
inflicting pain on others.

energetic action, to do some-
thing strongly

relentless cruelty, pitilessness,
his stubborn determination to in-
flict pain on those who offended
him

not likely to avail much, sure
not to be of any use

220 dimly dark, gloomily dark,
has far from enough light

that bounded the horizon, that
stood on the sky line or were the
farthest off things that could be
seen

constructing a living tomb,
making a tomb for a living person
shut up already in it

221 venture to tell you, dare to
tell you, or run the risk of letting
you know

222 was so constructed, was made
in such a way

apparent helplessness, her
utter inability to do anything to
free the man

to leave no stone unturned,
to do everything she could

in the prosecution, &c, in
carrying out her plan to help the
prisoner

casement, a window frame, or
part of one, made so that it can
turn on hinges and so open

223 some opportunity, &c, some
chance would occur

Such an opportunity, &c, the
chance you waited for has come
at last

as he emerges, as he comes out
of the prison

His absence will not, &c., they
will not find that he has got out of
prison

224 disguised as, dressed up, and
playing the part of your fellow-
workman

running such a terrible risk,
doing a thing for which he might
be made to suffer so dreadfully

prompted him, led him to make
the framework so that the prisoner
might have a chance to get out

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appealed to his avarice, tried to make him do what she wished for the money he would get for doing it

actuated by both, partly the bribe, and partly his kindly feelings, led him to agree to do as asked

225 to inform her, to tell her that he had been able to let the prisoner know what to do

the purport of, &c, what it was he should do, and what the result would be, as told him by the mason in his song

imprudence, want of foresight, want of thinking out what might happen

226 the exact position, the place where the spring was

abstained from touching it, took care not to try the spring

that a storm was brewing, that a storm was threatening was coming

distant rumble, the far off growl thunder makes

reverberating, echoing again and again among the hills

227 intended to be, &c, the place fixed on where his dead body would decay

thrilled the depth, stirred his very strongest feelings

tremendous peal, &c, an exceeding loud clap of thunder

228 mental agony, intense heartfelt grief and pain

before he was expected, sooner than he was looked for

happening to pass, going by chance past

229 nerves had been overstrained, she had been tried beyond her power of endurance

excitement and suspense, strong feeling for the prisoner and the doubt as to what would happen

recognized her brother, knew the prisoner was her brother

encounter between the two, a fight between husband and brother

swooned, lost consciousness on her errand of mercy, her

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mission to give help to one about to suffer

230 of the position of affairs, of how matters stood

consider, determine, decide

Information stories of the harsh and unjust things

to conciliate, to win the good opinion

231 returned unnoticed, got back without anyone knowing he had been away or had come back

232 took over the command, had himself proclaimed commander

assigned quarters, given a residence

233 who despises, &c, who looks with contempt on the gods of our fathers and calls them idols

234 at the recital of the dangers, when she heard what risks her brother had run

235 negotiate his release, to make arrangements with the enemy for setting him free

236 acceptable in the sight, &c, heaven could never approve of such an act, that is, the gods could never think it right

by indulgence, &c, tears would in this case do no good, they could not help to change matters

237 as far as their duties, &c, as far as what they owed their respective countries and chiefs would let them befriend

Shaisteh Khan (*Shaista*), the brother of Nur Jahan. He was sent by the emperor against Shivaji, took several hill forts, and lived in Shivaji's house in Poona. Shivaji, by a surprise attack, forced him to flee and killed his son. Later, Shaista was made by the emperor governor of Bengal.

Jaswant Singh (1638-78), was the first ruler of Marwar to be called Maharaja.

238 in their declining years, when they were growing old

Afzul Khan (*Afzal*), the general of Bijapur was treacherously killed by Shivaji, who had induced him to grant a private interview. The interview took place near the fort of Pratapgarh.

